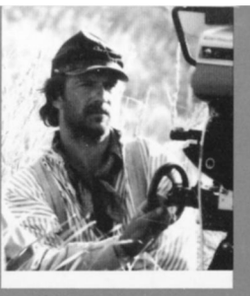
Film Quarterly



Volume 44
Number 4
Summer 1991

"Body Genres": Melodrama, Horror, Porn • A Native American View of *Dances with Wolves* • Annual Gargantuan, Colossal, Stupendous Book Roundup

$5.00

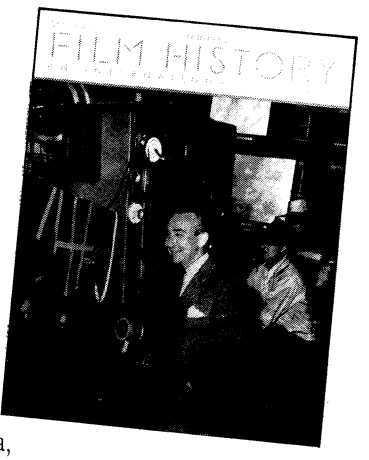
An International Journal

Film History

EDITOR

Richard Koszarski

American Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Avenue, Astoria, NY 11106, USA



SCOPE

FILM HISTORY is the only English language journal devoted solely to the field of motion picture historiography. The journal deals with all aspects of the development of international cinema, and the social, technological and economic context against which this occurred. The scope of previous papers has ranged widely from the technical and entrepreneurial innovations of early and pre-cinema experimenters, through all aspects of the production, distribution, exhibition and reception of commercial and non-commercial motion pictures. The journal also publishes selected examples of primary documentation, such as early film scenarios, oral history interviews and unpublished historic manuscripts.

RECENT CONTENTS

Hollywood censored: The production code administration and the Hollywood film industry, 1930-1940, *Gregory D. Black* / Emile Reynaud:First motion picture cartoonist, *Glen Myrent* / The first cinema shows in the Czech lands, *Zdek Stábla* / Introducing the "Marvellous Invention" to the provinces: Film exhibition in Lexington, Kentucky, 1896-1897, *Gregory A. Walker* / A history of the boxing film, 1894-1915: Social control and social reform in the progressive era, *Dan Streible* / Tom Daly's apprenticeship, *D.B. Jones* / Career in shadows: Interview with Charles Van Enger, *Richard Koszarski.*

PUBLISHER: Taylor & Francis New York

Subscription Information Volume 5 (1991) Quarterly ISSN 0892-2160
Institutional: US$90 / £51 Personal: US$50 / £31

Send for a free sample copy to:

TAYLOR & FRANCIS

UK: Rankine Road, Basingstoke, Hants RG24 0PR

USA: 1900 Frost Road, Suite 101, Bristol, PA, 19007-1598

Volume 44
Number 4
Summer 1991

Film Quarterly

Editor:
Ernest Callenbach
Book Review Editor:
David Desser
Assistant to the Editor:
Bonnie Dehler
New York Editor:
William Johnson
Los Angeles Editor:
Michael Dempsey
Boston Editor:
Randall Conrad
London Editor:
Colin Young
Rome Editor:
Gideon Bachmann

Editorial Board
Leo Braudy
Andries Deinum
John Fell
Brian Henderson
Albert Johnson
Marsha Kinder
Linda Williams

Indexed in
Access
Art Index
Arts and Humanities Citation Index
Book Review Index
Film Literature Index
Humanities Index
Index to Critical Film Reviews
International Index to Film Periodicals
MLA Directory of Periodicals

Printed in USA
Type: Freedmen's Organization, Los Angeles
Printing: Malloy Lithographing

Linda Williams
Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess **2**

REVIEW:

Dances with Wolves **14**

BOOK REVIEWS:

Gargantuan! Collossal! Stupendous!

The Annual *FQ* Film Book Roundup **24**

Autobiographies and Biographies **24**

Criticism **33**

History **56**

(The remaining categories of Reference, Scripts, Textbooks, Theory, and Miscellaneous will be covered in the Fall issue)

Cover: (top) Kevin Costner directing *Dances with Wolves*—(see page 14); (bottom) Lt. Dunbar and the Lakota tribesmen.

Film Quarterly (ISSN 0015-1386) is published quarterly at the following subscription prices by the University of California Press, Berkeley, California 94720. Second class-postage paid at Berkeley, California, and at additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Film Quarterly, University of California Press, Berkeley, California 94720. $5.00 per copy, $18.00 per year for individuals; $37.00 per year for institutions. Subscribers outside U.S., add $5.00 for postage.

Domestic claims for nonreceipt of issues should be made within 90 days of the month of publication, overseas claims within 180 days. Overseas delivery is not guaranteed.

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1994. ∞

Back issues subsequent to Volume 18 (1965-66) write to the University of California Press, 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94720. © 1991 by the Regents of the University of California.

Contributors in this issue

Richard Abel, author of two distinguished works on French film and theory, teaches at Drake University.

Carolyn Anderson teaches at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Edward D. Castillo is a California Cahuilla Indian and chair of Native American Studies at Sonoma State University.

Darius Cooper teaches at San Diego Mesa College.

David Desser, our Book Review Editor, teaches at the University of Illinois, Urbana.

John Fell, of our editorial board, is the author of *Film and the Narrative Tradition* (UC Press).

Dan Greenberg teaches in Michigan and keeps a sharp eye on the film reference book field.

Robert P. Kolker is the author of *A Cinema of Loneliness.*

Sarah Kozloff wrote *Invisible Storytellers: Voice-Over Narration in American Feature Film* (UC Press).

George Lellis teaches at Coker College, Hartsville, SC.

James L. Neibaur is a film historian.

Leland Poague teaches at Iowa State University, Ames.

Dana Polan, editor of *Cinema Journal*, teaches at the University of Pittsburgh.

Leonard Quart is the co-author of *American Film and Society Since 1945.*

Mark A. Reid teaches at the University of Florida and is finishing a book on black film-making.

Gregg Rickman teaches at San Francisco State University.

Alan Rosenthal is a film-maker and teaches at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Edward Baron Turk teaches at MIT and wrote *Child of Paradise*, on Marcel Carné.

William C. Wees's *Light Moving in Time: Studies in the Visual Aesthetics of Avant-Garde Film* will be published early next year by the UC Press.

Linda Williams wrote *Hard Core*, and is a member of our editorial board.

Tony Williams teaches at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.

Don Willis is the author of several film reference books.

Linda Williams

Film Bodies: Gender,

When my seven-year-old son and I go to the movies we often select from among categories of films that promise to be sensational, to give our bodies an actual physical jolt. He calls these movies "gross." My son and I agree that the fun of "gross" movies is in their display of sensations that are on the edge of respectable. Where we disagree—and where we as a culture often disagree, along lines of gender, age, or sexual orientation—is in which movies are over the edge, too "gross." To my son the good "gross" movies are those with scary monsters like Freddy Krueger (of the *Nightmare on Elm Street* series) who rip apart teenagers, especially teenage girls. These movies both fascinate and scare him; he is actually more interested in talking about than seeing them.

A second category, one that I like and my son doesn't, are sad movies that make you cry. These are gross in their focus on unseemly emotions that may remind him too acutely of his own powerlessness as a child. A third category, of both intense interest and disgust to my son (he makes the puke sign when speaking of it), he can only describe euphemistically as "the 'K' word." K is for kissing. To a seven-year-old boy it is kissing precisely which is obscene.

There is no accounting for taste, especially in the realm of the "gross." As a culture we most often invoke the term to designate excesses we wish to exclude; to say, for example, which of the Robert Mapplethorpe photos we draw the line at, but not to say what form and structure and function operate within the representations deemed excessive. Because so much attention goes to determining where to draw the line, discussions of the gross are often a highly confused hodgepodge of different categories of excess. For example, pornography is today more often deemed excessive for its violence than for its sex, while horror films are excessive in their displacement of sex onto violence. In

Genre, and Excess

contrast, melodramas are deemed excessive for their gender- and sex-linked pathos, for their naked displays of emotion; Ann Douglas once referred to the genre of romance fiction as "soft-core emotional porn for women" (Douglas, 1980).

Alone or in combination, heavy doses of sex, violence, and emotion are dismissed by one faction or another as having no logic or reason for existence beyond their power to excite. Gratuitous sex, gratuitous violence and terror, gratuitous emotion are frequent epithets hurled at the phenomenon of the "sensational" in pornography, horror, and melodrama. This essay explores the notion that there may be some value in thinking about the form, function, and system of seemingly gratuitous excesses in these three genres. For if, as it seems, sex, violence, and emotion are fundamental elements of the sensational effects of these three types of films, the designation "gratuitous" is itself gratuitous. My hope, therefore, is that by thinking comparatively about all three "gross" and sensational film body genres we might be able to get beyond the mere fact of sensation to explore its system and structure as well as its effect on the bodies of spectators.

Body Genres

The repetitive formulas and spectacles of film genres are often defined by their differences from the classical realist style of narrative cinema. These classical films have been characterized as efficient action-centered, goal-oriented linear narratives driven by the desire of a single protagonist, involving one or two lines of action, and leading to definitive closure. In their influential study of the Classical Hollywood Cinema, Bordwell, Thompson, and Staiger call this the Classical Hollywood style (1985).

As Rick Altman has noted in a recent article (1989), both genre study and the study of the somewhat more nebulous category of melodrama has long been hampered by assumptions about the classical nature of the dominant narrative to which melodrama and some individual genres have been opposed. Altman argues that Bordwell, Thompson, and Staiger, who locate the Classical Hollywood Style in the linear, progressive form of the Hollywood narrative, cannot accommodate "melodramatic" attributes like spectacle, episodic presentation, or dependence on coincidence except as limited exceptions or "play" within the dominant linear causality of the classical (Altman, 1988, 346).

Altman writes: "Unmotivated events, rhythmic montage, highlighted parallelism, overlong spectacles—these are the excesses in the classical narrative system that alert us to the existence of a competing logic, a second voice." (345-6) Altman, whose own work on the movie musical has necessarily relied upon analyses of seemingly "excessive" spectacles and parallel constructions, thus makes a strong case for the need to recognize the possibility that excess may itself be organized as a system (347). Yet analyses of systems of excess have been much slower to emerge in the genres whose non-linear spectacles have centered more directly upon the gross display of the human body. Pornography and horror films are two such systems of excess. Pornography is the lowest in cultural esteem, gross-out horror is next to lowest.

Melodrama, however, refers to a much broader category of films and a much larger system of excess. It would not be unreasonable, in fact, to consider all three of these genres under the extended rubric of melodrama, considered as a filmic mode of stylistic and/or emotional excess that stands in contrast to more "dominant" modes of realistic, goal-oriented narrative. In this extended sense melodrama can encompass a broad range of films marked by "lapses" in realism, by "excesses" of spectacle and displays of primal, even infantile emotions, and by narratives that seem circular and repetitive. Much of the interest of melodrama to film scholars over the last fifteen years originates in the sense that the form exceeds the normative system of much narrative cinema. I shall limit my focus here, however, to a more narrow sense of melodrama, leaving the broader category of the sensational to encompass the three genres I wish to consider. Thus, partly for purposes of contrast with pornography, the melodrama I will consider here

will consist of the form that has most interested feminist critics—that of "the woman's film" or "weepie." These are films addressed to women in their traditional status under patriarchy—as wives, mothers, abandoned lovers, or in their traditional status as bodily hysteria or excess, as in the frequent case of the woman "afflicted" with a deadly or debilitating disease.[1]

What are the pertinent features of bodily excess shared by these three "gross" genres? First, there is the spectacle of a body caught in the grip of intense sensation or emotion. Carol Clover, speaking primarily of horror films and pornography, has called films which privilege the sensational "body" genres (Clover, 189). I am expanding Clover's notion of low body genres to include the sensation of overwhelming pathos in the "weepie." The body spectacle is featured most sensationally in pornography's portrayal of orgasm, in horror's portrayal of violence and terror, and in melodrama's portrayal of weeping. I propose that an investigation of the visual and narrative pleasures found in the portrayal of these three types of excess could be important to a new direction in genre criticism that would take as its point of departure—rather than as an unexamined assumption—questions of gender construction, and gender address in relation to basic sexual fantasies.

Another pertinent feature shared by these body genres is the focus on what could probably best be called a form of ecstasy. While the classical meaning of the original Greek word is insanity and bewilderment, more contemporary meanings suggest components of direct or indirect sexual excitement and rapture, a rapture which informs even the pathos of melodrama.

Visually, each of these ecstatic excesses could be said to share a quality of uncontrollable convulsion or spasm—of the body "beside itself" with sexual pleasure, fear and terror, or overpowering sadness. Aurally, excess is marked by recourse not to the coded articulations of language but to inarticulate cries of pleasure in porn, screams of fear in horror, sobs of anguish in melodrama.

Looking at, and listening to, these bodily ecstasies, we can also notice something else that these genres seem to share: though quite differently gendered with respect to their targeted audiences, with pornography aimed, presumably, at active men and melodramatic weepies aimed, presumably, at passive women, and with contemporary gross-out horror aimed at adolescents careening wildly between the two masculine and feminine poles, in each of these genres the bodies of women figured on the screen have functioned traditionally as the primary *embodiments* of pleasure, fear, and pain.

In other words, even when the pleasure of viewing has traditionally been constructed for masculine spectators, as is the case in most traditional heterosexual pornography, it is the female body in the grips of an out-of-control ecstasy that has offered the most sensational sight. So the bodies of women have tended to function, ever since the eighteenth-century origins of these genres in the Marquis de Sade, Gothic fiction, and the novels of Richardson, as both the *moved* and the *moving*. It is thus through what Foucault has called the sexual saturation of the female body that audiences of all sorts have received some of their most powerful sensations (Foucault, 104).

There are, of course, other film genres which both portray and affect the sensational body—e.g., thrillers, musicals, comedies. I suggest, however, that the film genres that have had especially low cultural status—which have seemed to exist as excesses to the system of even the popular genres—are not simply those which sensationally display bodies on the screen and register effects in the bodies of spectators. Rather, what may especially mark these body genres as low is the perception that the body of the spectator is caught up in an almost involuntary mimicry of the emotion or sensation of the body on the screen along with the fact that the body displayed is female. Physical clown comedy is another "body" genre concerned with all manner of gross activities and body functions—eating shoes, slipping on banana peels. Nonetheless, it has not been deemed gratuitously excessive, probably because the reaction of the audience does not mimic the sensations experienced by the central clown. Indeed, it is almost a rule that the audience's physical reaction of laughter does not coincide with the often dead-pan reactions of the clown.

In the body genres I am isolating here, however, it seems to be the case that the success of these genres is often measured by the degree to which the audience sensation mimics what is seen on the screen. Whether this mimicry is exact, e.g., whether the spectator at the porn film actually orgasms, whether the spectator at the horror film ac-

Barbara Stanwyck in *Stella Dallas*—classic weepie.

tual shudders in fear, whether the spectator of the melodrama actually dissolves in tears, the success of these genres seems a self-evident matter of measuring bodily response. Examples of such measurement can be readily observed: in the "peter meter" capsule reviews in *Hustler* magazine, which measure the power of a porn film in degrees of erection of little cartoon penises; in horror films which measure success in terms of screams, fainting, and heart attacks in the audience (horror producer William Castle specialized in this kind of thing with such films as *The Tingler*, 1959); and in the long-standing tradition of women's films measuring their success in terms of one-, two-, or three-handkerchief movies.

What seems to bracket these particular genres from others is an apparent lack of proper esthetic distance, a sense of over-involvement in sensation and emotion. We feel manipulated by these texts—an impression that the very colloquialisms of "tear jerker" and "fear jerker" express—and to which we could add pornography's even cruder sense as texts to which some people might be inclined to "jerk off." The rhetoric of violence of the jerk suggests the extent to which viewers feel too directly, too viscerally manipulated by the text in specifically gendered ways. Mary Ann Doane, for example, writing about the most genteel of these jerkers—the maternal melodrama—equates the violence of this emotion to a kind of "textual rape" of the targeted female viewer, who is "feminized through pathos" (Doane, 1987, 95).

Feminist critics of pornography often evoke similar figures of sexual/textual violence when describing the operation of this genre. Robin Morgan's slogan "pornography is the theory, and rape is the practice" is well known (Morgan, 139). Implicit in this slogan is the notion that women are the objectified victims of pornographic representations, that the image of the sexually ecstatic woman so important to the genre is a celebration of female victimization and a prelude to female victimization in real life.

Less well known, but related, is the observation of the critic of horror films, James Twitchell, who notices that the Latin *horrere* means to bristle. He describes the way the nape hair stands on end during moments of shivering excitement. The aptly named Twitchell thus describes a kind of erection of the hair founded in the conflict between reactions of "fight and flight" (Twitchell, 10). While male victims in horror films may shudder and scream as well, it has long been a dictum of the genre that women make the best victims. "Torture the women!" was the famous advice given by Alfred Hitchcock.[2]

In the classic horror film the terror of the female victim shares the spectacle along with the monster. Fay Wray and the mechanized monster that made her scream in *King Kong* is a familiar example of the classic form. Janet Leigh in the shower in *Psycho* is a familiar example of a transition to a more sexually explicit form of the tortured and terrorized woman. And her daughter, Jamie Lee Curtis in *Halloween*, can serve as the more contemporary version of the terrorized woman victim. In both of these later films the spectacle of the monster seems to take second billing to the increasingly numerous victims slashed by the sexually disturbed but entirely human monsters.

In the woman's film a well-known classic is the long-suffering mother of the two early versions of *Stella Dallas* who sacrifices herself for her daughter's upward mobility. Contemporary film goers could recently see Bette Midler going through the same sacrifice and loss in the film *Stella*. Debra Winger in *Terms of Endearment* is another familiar example of this maternal pathos.

With the above genre stereotypes in mind we should now ask about the status of bodily excess in each of these genres. Is is simply the unseemly, "gratuitous" presence of the sexually ecstatic woman, the tortured woman, the weeping woman —and the accompanying presence of the sexual fluids, the blood and the tears that flow from her

body and which are presumably mimicked by spectators—that mark the excess of each type of film? How shall we think of these bodily displays in relation to one another, as a system of excess in the popular film? And finally, how excessive are they really?

The psychoanalytic system of analysis that has been so influential in film study in general and in feminist film theory and criticism has been remarkably ambivalent about the status of excess in its major tools of analysis. The categories of fetishism, voyeurism, sadism, and masochism frequently invoked to describe the pleasures of film spectatorship are by definition perversions. Perversions are usually defined as sexual excesses, specifically as excesses which are deflected away from "proper" end goals onto substitute goals or objects—fetishes instead of genitals, looking instead of touching, etc. —which seem excessive or gratuitous. Yet the perverse pleasures of film viewing are hardly gratuitous. They have been considered so basic that they have often been presented as norms. What is a film, after all, without voyeurism? Yet, at the same time, feminist critics have asked, what is the position of women within this pleasure geared to a presumably sadistic "male gaze"? (Mulvey, 1976) To what extent is she its victim? Are the orgasmic woman of pornography and the tortured woman of horror merely in the service of the sadistic male gaze? And is the weeping woman of melodrama appealing to the abnormal perversions of masochism in female viewers?

These questions point to the ambiguity of the terms of perversion used to describe the normal pleasures of film viewing. Without attempting to go into any of the complexities of this discussion here—a discussion which must ultimately relate to the status of the term perversion in theories of sexuality themselves—let me simply suggest the value of not invoking the perversions as terms of condemnation. As even the most cursory reading of Freud shows, sexuality is by definition perverse. The "aims" and "objects" of sexual desire are often obscure and inherently substitutive. Unless we are willing to see reproduction as the common goal of the sexual drive, we have to admit, as Jonathan Dollimore has put it, that we are all perverts. Dollimore's goal of retrieving the "concept of perversion as a category of cultural analysis"—as a structure intrinsic to all sexuality rather than extrinsic to it—is crucial to any attempt to understand cultural forms—such as our three body genres—in which fantasy predominates.[3]

Pleasure: *Babylon Pink* (porn)

Structures of Perversion in the "Female Body Genres"

Each of the three body genres I have isolated hinges on the spectacle of a "sexually saturated" female body, and each offers what many feminist critics would agree to be spectacles of feminine victimization. But this victimization is very different in each type of film and cannot be accounted for simply by pointing to the sadistic power and pleasure of masculine subject positions punishing or dominating feminine objects.

Many feminists have pointed to the victimization of the woman performers of pornography who must actually do the acts depicted in the film, as well as to the victimization of characters within the films (Dworkin, 1979; MacKinnon, 1987). Pornography, in this view, is fundamentally sadistic. In women's weepies, on the other hand, feminists have pointed to the spectacles of intense suffering and loss as masochistic.

In horror films, while feminists have often pointed to the women victims who suffer simulated torture and mutilation as victims of sadism (Williams, 1983), more recent feminist work has suggested that the horror film may present an interesting, and perhaps instructive, case of oscillation between masochistic and sadistic poles. This more recent argument, advanced by Carol J. Clover, has suggested that pleasure, for a masculine-identified viewer, oscillates between identifying with the initial passive powerlessness of the abject

and terrorized girl-victim of horror and her later, active empowerment (Clover, 1987).

This argument holds that when the girl-victim of a film like *Halloween* finally grabs the phallic knife, or ax, or chain saw to turn the tables on the monster-killer, that viewer identification shifts from an "abject terror gendered feminine" to an active power with bisexual components. A gender-confused monster is foiled, often symbolically castrated by an "androgynous" "final girl" (Clover, 206–209). In slasher films, identification with victimization is a roller-coaster ride of sadomasochistic thrills.

Fear: Janet Leigh in *Psycho* (norror)

We could thus initially schematize the perverse pleasures of these genres in the following way: pornography's appeal to its presumed male viewers would be characterized as sadistic, horror films' appeal to the emerging sexual identities of its (frequently adolescent) spectators would be sadomasochistic and women's films appeal to presumed female viewers would be masochistic.

The masochistic component of viewing pleasure for women has been the most problematic term of perversion for feminist critics. It is interesting, for example, that most of our important studies of masochism—whether by Deleuze (1971), Silverman (1980; 1988) or Studlar (1985)—have all focused on the exoticism of masculine masochism rather than the familiarity of female masochism. Masochistic pleasure for women has paradoxically seemed either too normal—too much the normal yet intolerable condition of women—or too perverse to be taken seriously as pleasure.

There is thus a real need to be clearer than we have been about what is in masochism for women —how power and pleasure operate in fantasies of domination which appeal to women. There is an equal need to be clearer than we have about what is in sadism for men. Here the initial opposition between these two most gendered genres—women's weepies and male heterosexual pornography—needs to be complicated. I have argued elsewhere, for example, that pornography has too simplistically been allied with a purely sadistic fantasy structure. Indeed, those troubling films and videos which deploy instruments of torture on the bodies of women have been allied so completely with masculine viewing pleasures that we have not paid enough attention to their appeal to women except to condemn such appeal as false consciousness (Williams, 1989, 184–228).

One important complication of the initial schema I have outlined would thus be to take a lesson from Clover's more bisexual model of viewer identification in horror film and stress the sadomasochistic component of each of these body genres through their various appropriations of melodramatic fantasies that are, in fact, basic to each. All of these genres could, for example, be said to offer highly melodramatic enactments of sexually charged, if not sexually explicit, relations. The subgenre of sadomasochistic pornography, with its

Pain: *Imitation of Life* (melodrama)

suspension of pleasure over the course of prolonged sessions of dramatic suffering, offers a particularly intense, almost parodic, enactment of the classic melodramatic scenario of the passive and innocent female victim suffering at the hands of a leering villain. We can also see in horror films of tortured women a similar melodramatization of the innocent victim. An important difference, of course, lies in the component of the victim's overt sexual pleasure in the scenario of domination.

But even in the most extreme displays of feminine masochistic suffering, there is always a component of either power or pleasure for the woman victim. In slasher horror films we have seen how identification seems to oscillate between powerlessness and power. In sadomasochistic pornography and in melodramatic woman's weepies, feminine subject positions appear to be constructed which achieve a modicum of power and pleasure within the given limits of patriarchal constraints on women. It is worth noting as well that *non*-sadomasochistic pornography has historically been one of the few types of popular film that has not punished women for actively pursuing their sexual pleasure.

In the subgenre of sadomasochistic pornography, however, the female masochist in the scenario must be devious in her pursuit of pleasure. She plays the part of passive sufferer in order to obtain pleasure. Under a patriarchal double standard that has rigorously separated the sexually passive "good" girl from the sexually active "bad" girl, masochistic role-playing offers a way out of this dichotomy by combining the good girl with the bad: the passive "good girl" can prove to her witnesses (the super-ego who is her torturer) that she does not will the pleasure that she receives. Yet the sexually active "bad" girl enjoys this pleasure and has knowingly arranged to endure the pain that earns it. The cultural law which decides that some girls are good and others are bad is not defeated but within its terms pleasure has been negotiated and "paid for" with a pain that conditions it. The "bad" girl is punished, but in return she receives pleasure.[4]

In contrast, the sadomasochistic teen horror films kill off the sexually active "bad" girls, allowing only the non-sexual "good" girls to survive. But these good girls become, as if in compensation, remarkably active, to the point of appropriating phallic power to themselves. It is as if this phallic power is granted so long as it is rigorously separated from phallic or any other sort of pleasure. For these pleasures spell sure death in this genre.

In the melodramatic woman's film we might think to encounter a purer form of masochism on the part of female viewers. Yet even here the female viewer does not seem to be invited to identify wholly with the sacrificing good woman, but rather with a variety of different subject positions, including those which empathically look on at her own suffering. While I would not argue that there is a very strong sadistic component to these films, I do argue that there is a strong mixture of passivity and activity, and a bisexual oscillation between the poles of each, in even this genre.

For example, the woman viewer of a maternal melodrama such as *Terms of Endearment* or *Steel Magnolias* does not simply identify with the suffering and dying heroines of each. She may equally identify with the powerful matriarchs, the surviving mothers who preside over the deaths of their daughters, experiencing the exhilaration and triumph of survival. The point is simply that identification is neither fixed nor entirely passive.

While there are certainly masculine and feminine, active and passive, poles to the left and right of the chart on which we might position these three genres (see below), the subject positions that appear to be constructed by each of the genres are not as gender-linked and as gender-fixed as has often been supposed. This is especially true today as hard-core pornography is gaining appeal with women viewers. Perhaps the most recent proof in this genre of the breakdown of rigid dichotomies of masculine and feminine, active and passive is the creation of an alternative, oscillating category of address to viewers. Although heterosexual hard core once addressed itself exclusively to heterosexual men, it has now begun to address itself to heterosexual couples and women as well; and in addition to homosexual hard core, which has addressed itself to gay and (to a lesser extent) lesbian viewers, there is now a new category of video called bisexual. In these videos men do it with women, women do it with women, men do it with men and then all do it with one another, in the process breaking down a fundamental taboo against male-to-male sex.[5]

A related interpenetration of once more separate categories of masculine and feminine is what

An Anatomy of Film Bodies

Genre:	Pornography	Horror	Melodrama
Bodily excess	sex	violence	emotion
Ecstasy: —shown by	ecstatic sex orgasm ejaculation	ecstatic violence shudder blood	ecstatic woe sob tears
Presumed audience:	men (active)	adolescent boys (active/passive)	girls, women (passive)
Perversion:	sadism	sadomasochism	masochism
Originary fantasy:	seduction	castration	origin
Temporality of fantasy:	on time!	too early!	too late!
Genre cycles: "classic"	stag films (20's-40's) *The Casting Couch*	"classic" horror: *Dracula* *Frankenstein* *Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde* *King Kong*	"classic" women's films: maternal melodrama: *Stella Dallas* *Mildred Pierce* romance: *Back Street* *Letter from an Unknown Woman*
contemporary	feature-length hard core porn: *Deep Throat*, etc. *The Punishment of Anne* Femme Productions Bi-sexual Tri-sexual	post-*Psycho*: *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* *Halloween* *Dressed to Kill* *Videodrome*	male and female "weepies" *Steel Magnolias* *Stella* *Dad*

has come to be known in some quarters as the "male weepie." These are mainstream melodramas engaged in the activation of the previously repressed emotions of men and in breaking the taboos against male-to-male hugs and embraces. The father-son embrace that concludes *Ordinary People* (1980) is exemplary. More recently, paternal weepies have begun to compete with the maternal—as in the conventional *Dad* (1989) or the less conventional, wild paternal displays of *Twin Peaks*.

The point is certainly not to admire the "sexual freedom" of this new fluidity and oscillation—the new femininity of men who hug and the new masculinity of women who leer—as if it represented any ultimate defeat of phallic power. Rather, the more useful lesson might be to see what this new fluidity and oscillation permits in the construction of feminine viewing pleasures once thought not to exist at all. (It is instructive, for example, that in the new bisexual pornography women characters are shown verbally articulating their visual pleasure as they watch men perform sex with men.)

The deployment of sex, violence, and emotion would thus seem to have very precise functions in these body genres. Like all popular genres, they address persistent problems in our culture, in our sexualities, in our very identities. The deployment of sex, violence, and emotion is thus in no way gratuitous and in no way strictly limited to each of these genres; it is instead a cultural form of problem solving. As I have argued in *Hard Core*, pornographic films now tend to present sex as a problem, to which the performance of more, different, or better sex is posed as the solution (Williams, 1989). In horror a violence related to sexual difference is the problem, more violence related to sexual difference

is also the solution. In women's films the pathos of loss is the problem, repetitions and variations of this loss are the generic solution.

Structures of Fantasy

All of these problems are linked to gender identity and might be usefully explored as genres of gender fantasy. It is appropriate to ask, then, not only about the structures of perversion, but also about the structures of fantasy in each of these genres. In doing so, we need to be clear about the nature of fantasy itself. For fantasies are not, as is sometimes thought, wish-fulfilling linear narratives of mastery and control leading to closure and the attainment of desire. They are marked, rather, by the prolongation of desire, and by the lack of fixed position with respect to the objects and events fantasized.

In their classic essay "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality," Jean Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis (1968) argue that fantasy is not so much a narrative that enacts the quest for an object of desire as it is a setting for desire, a place where conscious and unconscious, self and other, part and whole meet. Fantasy is the place where "desubjectified" subjectivities oscillate between self and other occupying no fixed place in the scenario (16).

In the three body genres discussed here, this fantasy component has probably been better understood in horror film, a genre often understood as belonging to the "fantastic." However, it has been less well understood in pornography and women's film melodrama. Because these genres display fewer fantastic special effects and because they rely on certain conventions of realism—the activation of social problems in melodrama, the representation of real sexual acts in pornography—they seem less obviously fantastic. Yet the usual criticisms that these forms are improbable, that they lack psychological complexity and narrative closure, and that they are repetitious, become moot as evaluation if such features are intrinsic to their engagement with fantasy.

There is a link, in other words, between the appeal of these forms and their ability to address, if never *really* to "solve," basic problems related to sexual identity. Here, I would like to forge a connection between Laplanche and Pontalis's structural understanding of fantasies as myths of origins which try to cover the discrepancy between two moments in time and the distinctive temporal structure of these particular genres. Laplanche and Pontalis argue that fantasies which are myths of origins address the insoluble problem of the discrepancy between an irrecoverable original experience presumed to have actually taken place—as in the case, for example, of the historical primal scene—and the uncertainty of its hallucinatory revival. The discrepancy exists, in other words, between the actual existence of the lost object and the sign which evokes both this existence and its absence.

Laplanche and Pontalis maintain that the most basic fantasies are located at the juncture of an irrecoverable real event that took place somewhere in the past and a totally imaginary event that never took place. The "event" whose temporal and spatial existence can never be fixed is thus ultimately, according to Laplanche and Pontalis, that of "the origin of the subject"—an origin which psychoanalysts tell us cannot be separated from the discovery of sexual difference (11).

It is this contradictory temporal structure of being situated somewhere between the "too early" and the "too late" of the knowledge of difference that generates desire that is most characteristic of fantasy. Freud introduced the concept of "original fantasy" to explain the mythic function of fantasies which seem to offer repetitions of and "solutions" to major enigmas confronting the child (Freud, 1915). These enigmas are located in three areas: the enigma of the origin of sexual desire, an enigma that is "solved," so to speak, by the fantasy of seduction; the enigma of sexual difference, "solved" by the fantasy of castration; and finally the enigma of the origin of self, "solved" by the fantasy of family romance or return to origins (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1968, 11).

Each of the three body genres I have been describing could be seen to correspond in important ways to one of these original fantasies: pornography, for example, is the genre that has seemed to endlessly repeat the fantasies of primal seduction, of meeting the other, seducing or being seduced by the other in an ideal "pornotopia" where, as Steven Marcus has noted, it is always bedtime (Marcus, 269). Horror is the genre that seems to endlessly repeat the trauma of castration as if to "explain," by repetitious mastery, the originary problem of sexual difference. And melodramatic weepie is the genre that seems to endlessly repeat

our melancholic sense of the loss of origins—impossibly hoping to return to an earlier state which is perhaps most fundamentally represented by the body of the mother.

Of course each of these genres has a history and does not simply "endlessly repeat." The fantasies activated by these genres are repetitious, but not fixed and eternal. If traced back to origins each could probably be shown to have emerged with the formation of the bourgeois subject and the intensifying importance to this subject of specified sexualities. But the importance of repetition in each genre should not blind us to the very different temporal structure of repetition in each fantasy. It could be, in fact, that these different temporal structures constitute the different utopian component of problem-solving in each form. Thus the typical (non-sadomasochistic) pornographic fantasies of seduction operate to "solve" the problem of the origin of desire. Attempting to answer the insoluble question of whether desire is imposed from without through the seduction of the parent or whether it originates within the self, pornography answers this question by typically positing a fantasy of desire coming from within the subject *and* from without. Non-sadomasochistic pornography attempts to posit the utopian fantasy of perfect temporal coincidence: a subject and object (or seducer and seduced) who meet one another "on time!" and "now!" in shared moments of mutual pleasure that it is the special challenge of the genre to portray.

In contrast to pornography, the fantasy of recent teen horror corresponds to a temporal structure which raises the anxiety of not being ready, the problem, in effect, of "too early!" Some of the most violent and terrifying moments of the horror film genre occur in moments when the female victim meets the psycho-killer-monster unexpectedly, before she is ready. The female victims who are not ready for the attack die. This surprise encounter, too early, often takes place at a moment of sexual anticipation when the female victim thinks she is about to meet her boyfriend or lover. The monster's violent attack on the female victims vividly enacts a symbolic castration which often functions as a kind of punishment for an ill-timed exhibition of sexual desire. These victims are taken by surprise in the violent attacks which are then deeply felt by spectators (especially the adolescent male spectators

The Story of Joanna (s-m porn)

drawn to the slasher subgenre) as linked to the knowledge of sexual difference. Again the key to the fantasy is timing—the way the knowledge of sexual difference too suddenly overtakes both characters and viewers, offering a knowledge for which we are never prepaired.

Finally, in contrast to pornography's meeting "on time!" and horror's unexpected meeting "too early!," we can identify melodrama's pathos of the "too late!" In these fantasies the quest to return to and discover the origin of the self is manifest in the form of the child's fantasy of possessing ideal parents in the Freudian family romance, in the parental fantasy of possessing the child in maternal or paternal melodrama, and even in the lovers' fantasy of possessing one another in romantic weepies. In these fantasies the quest for connection is always tinged with the melancholy of loss. Origins are already lost, the encounters always take place too late, on death beds or over coffins. (Neale, 1988).

Italian critic Franco Moretti has argued, for example, that literature that makes us cry operates via a special manipulation of temporality: what triggers our crying is not just the sadness or suffering of the character in the story but a very precise moment when characters in the story catch up with and realize what the audience already knows. We cry, Moretti argues, not just because the characters do, but at the precise moment when desire is finally recognized as futile. The release of tension produces tears—which become a kind of homage to a happiness that is kissed goodbye. Pathos is thus a surrender to reality but it is a surrender that pays homage to the ideal that tried to wage war on it (Moretti, 1983, 179). Moretti thus stresses a subver-

sive, utopian component in what has often been considered a form of passive powerlessness. The fantasy of the meeting with the other that is always too late can thus be seen as based upon the utopian desire that it not be too late to remerge with the other who was once part of the self.

Obviously there is a great deal of work to be done to understand the form and function of these three body genres in relation to one another and in relation to the fundamental appeal as "original fantasies." Obviously also the most difficult work of understanding this relation between gender, genre, fantasy, and structures of perversion will come in the attempt to relate original fantasies to historical context and specific generic history. However, there is one thing that already seems clear: these "gross" body genres which may seem so violent and inimical to women cannot be dismissed as evidence of a monolithic and unchanging misogyny, as either pure sadism for male viewers or masochism for females. Their very existence and popularity hinges upon rapid changes taking place in relations between the "sexes" and by rapidly changing notions of gender—of what it means to be a man or a woman. To dismiss them as bad excess whether of explicit sex, violence, or emotion, or as bad perversions, whether of masochism or sadism, is not to address their function as cultural problem-solving. Genres thrive, after all, on the persistence of the problems they address; but genres thrive also in their ability to recast the nature of these problems.

Finally, as I hope this most recent example of the melodrama of tears suggests, we may be wrong in our assumption that the bodies of spectators simply reproduce the sensations exhibited by bodies on the screen. Even those masochistic pleasures associated with the powerlessness of the "too late!" are not absolutely abject. Even tear jerkers do not operate to force a simple mimicry of the sensation exhibited on the screen. Powerful as the sensations of the jerk might be, we may only be beginning to understand how they are deployed in generic and gendered cultural forms.

Notes

I owe thanks to Rhona Berenstein, Leo Braudy, Ernest Callenbach, Paul Fitzgerald, Jane Gaines, Mandy Harris, Brian Henderson, Marsha Kinder, Eric Rentschler, and Pauline Yu for generous advice on drafts of this essay.

1. For an excellent summary of many of the issues involved with both film melodrama and the "women's film," see Christine Gledhill's introduction to the anthology *Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film* (Gledhill, 1987). For a more general inquiry into the theatrical origins of melodrama, see Peter Brooks's (1976) *The Melodramatic Imagination*. And for an extended theoretical inquiry and analysis of a body of melodramatic women's films, see Mary Ann Doane (1987), *The Desire to Desire*.
2. Carol J. Clover (1987) discusses the meanings of this famous quote in her essay, "Her Body/Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film."
3. Dollimore (1990, 13). Dollimore's project, along with Teresa de Lauretis's more detailed examination of the term perversion in Freudian psychoanalysis (in progress) will be central to any more detailed attempts to understand the perverse pleasures of these gross body genres.
4. I discuss these issues at length in a chapter on sadomasochistic pornography in my book *Hard Core* (1989).
5. Titles of these relatively new (post 1986) hard-core videos include: *Bisexual Fantasies*; *Bi-Mistake*; *Karen's Bi-Line*; *Bi-Dacious*; *Bi-Night*; *Bi and Beyond*; *The Ultimate Fantasy*; *Bi and Beyond II*; *Bi and Beyond III: Hermaphrodites*.

Works Cited

Altman, Rick. 1989. "Dickens, Griffith, and Film Theory Today." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 88:321–359.

Bordwell, David, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson. 1985. *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Clover, Carol J. 1987. "Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film." *Representations* 20 (Fall): 187–228.

Deleuze, Gilles. 1971. *Masochism: An Interpretation of Coldness and Cruelty*. Translated by Jean McNeil. New York: Braziller.

Doane, Mary Ann. 1987. *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940's*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Doane, Mary Ann, Patricia Mellencamp, and Linda Williams, eds. 1983. *Re-vision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism*. American Film Institute Monograph Series, vol. 3. Frederick, MD: University Publications of America.

Dollimore, Jonathan. 1990. "The Cultural Politics of Perversion: Augustine, Shakespeare, Freud, Foucault." *Genders* 8.

Douglas, Ann. 1980. "Soft-Porn Culture." *The New Republic*, 30 August 1980.

Dworkin, Andrea. 1979. *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*. New York: Perigee Books.

Foucault, Michel. 1978. *The History of Sexuality* Vol. 1: *An Introduction*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon Books.

Freud, Sigmund. 1915. "Instincts and their Vicissitudes." Vol. 14 of the *Standard Edition of The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. London: Hogarth. 14.

Laplanche, Jean, J. B. Pontalis. 1968. "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality." *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*. 49:1-18.
MacKinnon. 1987. *Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Marcus, Steven, 1964/74. *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth Century England*. New York: New American Library.
Morgan, Robin, 1980. "Theory and Practice: Pornography and Rape." In *Take Back the Night: Women on Pornography*, edited by Laura Lederer. New York: Morrow.
Moretti, Franco. 1983. "Kindergarten." In *Signs Taken for Wonders*. London: Verso.
Mulvey, Laura. 1975. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Screen* 16, no. 3: 6-18.
Neale, Steve. 1986. "Melodrama and Tears." *Screen* 27 (Nov.-Dec.): 6-22.
Silverman, Kaja. 1980. "Masochism and Subjectivity." *Framework* 12:2-9.
———. 1988. "Masochism and Male Subjectivity." *Camera Obscura* 17: 31-66.
Studlar, Gaylyn. 1985. *In the Realm of Pleasure: Von Sternberg, Dietrich and the Masochistic Aesthetic*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
Twitchell, James. 1985. *Dreadful Pleasures: An Anatomy of Modern Horror*. New York: Oxford.
Williams, Linda. 1983. "When the Woman Looks." In *Re-Vision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism*. See Doane (1983).
———. 1989. *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure and the "Frenzy of the Visible."* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Errata

We inadvertently omitted two contributor identifications in our last issue. Apologies to Lloyd Michaels, who teaches at Allegheny College and edits the journal *Film Criticism*; and to Maurizio Viano, who teaches at Wellesley College and whose *A Certain Realism: Towards a Use of Pasolini's Film Theory and Practice* will be published next year by the University of California Press.

About *FQ*'s Index

Heretofore, we have prepared our own Index to each four-issue "volume" of the journal; it has been bound in at the end of the Summer issues. However, our contents are indexed in the many indexing services listed on the contents page, and they are also accessible through the new public-library data bank system, Infobank. We are therefore discontinuing our own indexes, confident that readers will be able to locate anything that has appeared in our pages by other easily accessible means.

film studies from Minnesota

FILM HIEROGLYPHS
Ruptures of Classical Cinema
TOM CONLEY
Filmmaking considered from the points (ruptures) at which story, image, and writing appear to be at odds.
$15.95 paper

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS
Film, Feminism, and Science Fiction
Edited by CONSTANCE PENLEY, ELISABETH LYON, LYNN SPIGEL, AND JANET BERGSTROM
Addresses the ways conventional notions of sexual difference are reworked in science fiction films. Includes the complete script of Peter Wollen's 1987 film *Friendship's Death*.
$12.95 paper

CINEMA ONE
The Movement-Image
CINEMA TWO
The Time-Image
GILLES DELEUZE
"In *Cinema 1* Deleuze saw the cinema prior to WW II as essentially narrative in character, dedicated to developing images of movement. In *Cinema 2* he perceives images of time being developed since the war to supplant those of motion and sees fragmentation and solitary images replacing the previous narrative emphasis. . . . well worth reading."
Choice
$15.95 paper (each volume)

at bookstores or from the
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS

800-388-3863 ext. 59

Laplanche, Jean, J. B. Pontalis. 1968. "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality." *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*. 49:1-18.
MacKinnon. 1987. *Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Marcus, Steven, 1964/74. *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth Century England*. New York: New American Library.
Morgan, Robin, 1980. "Theory and Practice: Pornography and Rape." In *Take Back the Night: Women on Pornography*, edited by Laura Lederer. New York: Morrow.
Moretti, Franco. 1983. "Kindergarten." In *Signs Taken for Wonders*. London: Verso.
Mulvey, Laura. 1975. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Screen* 16, no. 3: 6-18.
Neale, Steve. 1986. "Melodrama and Tears." *Screen* 27 (Nov.-Dec.): 6-22.
Silverman, Kaja. 1980. "Masochism and Subjectivity." *Framework* 12:2-9.
———. 1988. "Masochism and Male Subjectivity." *Camera Obscura* 17: 31-66.
Studlar, Gaylyn. 1985. *In the Realm of Pleasure: Von Sternberg, Dietrich and the Masochistic Aesthetic*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
Twitchell, James. 1985. *Dreadful Pleasures: An Anatomy of Modern Horror*. New York: Oxford.
Williams, Linda. 1983. "When the Woman Looks." In *Re-Vision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism*. See Doane (1983).
———. 1989. *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure and the "Frenzy of the Visible."* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Errata

We inadvertently omitted two contributor identifications in our last issue. Apologies to Lloyd Michaels, who teaches at Allegheny College and edits the journal *Film Criticism*; and to Maurizio Viano, who teaches at Wellesley College and whose *A Certain Realism: Towards a Use of Pasolini's Film Theory and Practice* will be published next year by the University of California Press.

About *FQ*'s Index

Heretofore, we have prepared our own Index to each four-issue "volume" of the journal; it has been bound in at the end of the Summer issues. However, our contents are indexed in the many indexing services listed on the contents page, and they are also accessible through the new public-library data bank system, Infobank. We are therefore discontinuing our own indexes, confident that readers will be able to locate anything that has appeared in our pages by other easily accessible means.

film studies from Minnesota

FILM HIEROGLYPHS
Ruptures of Classical Cinema
TOM CONLEY
Filmmaking considered from the points (ruptures) at which story, image, and writing appear to be at odds.
$15.95 paper

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS
Film, Feminism, and Science Fiction
Edited by CONSTANCE PENLEY, ELISABETH LYON, LYNN SPIGEL, AND JANET BERGSTROM
Addresses the ways conventional notions of sexual difference are reworked in science fiction films. Includes the complete script of Peter Wollen's 1987 film *Friendship's Death*.
$12.95 paper

CINEMA ONE
The Movement-Image
CINEMA TWO
The Time-Image
GILLES DELEUZE
"In *Cinema 1* Deleuze saw the cinema prior to WW II as essentially narrative in character, dedicated to developing images of movement. In *Cinema 2* he perceives images of time being developed since the war to supplant those of motion and sees fragmentation and solitary images replacing the previous narrative emphasis. . . . well worth reading."
Choice
$15.95 paper (each volume)

at bookstores or from the
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS

800-388-3863 ext. 59

Reviews

Dances with Wolves

Director: Kevin Costner. Script: Michael Blake. Producer: Jim Wilson. Cinematography: Dean Semler. Music: John Barry. Editing: Neil Trans. Orion Pictures.

Dances With Wolves is not only a well crafted film by a first-time director, but it also touches on a number of important spiritual, social, and environmental issues vital to all Americans at the end of this century. American Indian historians have long been well aware of many important stories that resulted from the encounters between native peoples and Euro-Americans in the last century. Hope, fear, hatred, dread, humor, guilt, and loathing can be found in nearly every such encounter. From a native point of view, we have long been mystified as to why this rich mine of human experience has been studiously avoided by Hollywood film-makers. Within the Indian world, Costner's powerful directing debut is for certain the most talked about mainstream Hollywood Indian film in two decades. Despite some negative reviews by jaded Eurocentric urbanites, Costner's vision of an alternate Lakota encounter with Americans has captured the imagination of Americans from a variety of social, economic, and racial backgrounds.

From a native viewpoint, the film's primary virtue is its sensitive exploration of a native culture. The screenplay, without preaching, engenders understanding, acceptance, and sympathy for Lakota culture. I am thinking especially here of small scenes, as when Kicking Bird and his wife get into bed and we sense concern and confusion in his face; then he pulls out one of his children's dolls that he has lain upon. This vignette tells us in purely cinematic terms of the humanity of this family, and rings warmly familiar to all parents in the audience. With such small touches the director achieved his goal of demonstrating the most important aspect of the picture was ". . . the sentiment, the humanity, not the politics."[1]

As non-Indian archaeologists, ethnographers, and historians have been painfully reminded over the last 20 years, all contemporary endeavors to interpret Indian history and culture have the dual potential of possibly hurting or helping contemporary Indians. In this respect most native peoples seem pleased with Costner in this most recent portrayal of our people in the last century. However, those expecting immediate reform in the social, economic, and political fortunes of the Sioux or any other tribe are sure to be disappointed. This film may help bring about much-needed reform in our nation and our tribes, but true reform will always require more than Hollywood can offer. Nevertheless, to minimize the power of the mass media to generate sympathy, concerns, and demands for reform is to ignore reality. For that reason alone it seems worthwhile to devote some thoughtful reflection to the shadows of the Indians whom Costner and screenwriter Michael Blake have lyrically dance upon the screen, thrusting us backward in time for a fleeting moment.

The characters portrayed are both engaging and varied. Kicking Bird is of course the most sympathetic of the Lakotas, the father figure who rescues and raises the small white girl (Christine/Stands With Fists) who had escaped a Pawnee raiding party, and eventually opens communication between Dunbar and the Lakota. He is a shaman/warrior whose poised and convincing portrayal by Canadian-born Oneida Indian Graham Green rivals Costner's, and gained him an Academy Award nomination. The archetype Lakota warrior in the story is Wind In His Hair, played by Omaha Indian Rodney Grant. His commanding presence is sexually charged, with an aura of danger just beneath his angry bluster. Early on in the film his character is dramatically revealed in a confrontation with Dunbar: he charges on horseback directly toward Dunbar, stopping only feet from the soldier, shouts his defiance and lack of fear of this strange white man, and disdainfully turns his back on a cocked pistol to demonstrate his contempt for Dunbar—who promptly faints.

The most familiar Native American actor is folk singer/activist Floyd Red Crow Westerman, a Lakota Indian. He plays Ten Bears, chief of the film's Lakota band. His understated performance

Scouting the herd of buffalo: *Dances with Wolves*

is in sharp contrast to his real character: for those who know him, he is nearly always smiling and a performer with an easygoing demeanor. Perhaps reflecting the growing dominance of warriors in Lakota society as the crisis of the frontier enveloped the plains Indian societies, the film offers few prominent parts for Indian women. The most important Indian female part is Canadian Cree/Chippewa Tantoo Cardinal as Black Shawl, wife of Kicking Bird. It is a small part which she performs skilfully. She delivers one of the best one-liners in the film: when Kicking Bird declares that his crying step-daughter, Stands With Fists, is being difficult, Black Shawl observes sardonically that it is perhaps Kicking Bird who is being difficult, since Stands With Fists is the one who is crying. While women in the audience will find this an appropriate rejoinder, it offers little comfort for the curious lack of strong females or for that matter, any young Indian women/children roles in the remainder of the screenplay. On the other hand, young viewers will be especially pleased with the trio of pre-pubescent Lakota boys led by Lakota Indian Nathan Lee Chasing His Horse (Smiles A Lot), who appropriately displays the independence, foolishness, and self-sacrificing courage typical of Indian youth both then and today. The other Lakota characters inhabiting Ten Bears's village, while undeniably likable, are rather conventional and lack the delightfully quirky characters found in *Little Big Man*'s Cheyenne camp—a saucy berdache (homosexual) and the frustrated contrary warrior.

The "enemy" Pawnee portrayal has generated a good deal of discussion among Indians. Some viewers have decried the one-dimensional and negative portrait of Pawnee so badly maligned earlier in *Little Big Man* (1970). Despite a largely negative image, careful viewers will note the Pawnee war party that attacks the mule skinner Timmons is led by the unidentified actor and character I call "Violent Leader" who seeks both to humiliate and drive his hesitant followers into attacking the yet unseen whites. Later we see the Pawnee scouts helping the soldiers track down Ten Bears's people. One recalls Jack Crabbe's acerbic declaration, "Pawnees always were sucking up to whites," from *Little Big Man*. In reality much of Indian frontier history is characterized by a native survival response that varied between fight, flight, and accommodation. Earlier, the Pawnee offered considerable armed resistance to white encroachment upon their territory while later they assisted the US government in pursuing their traditional enemies, the Sioux. These unfortunate people were subjected to the purposeful introduction of small pox by traders along the Santa Fe trail in 1831.[2] The film makes it too easy to dismiss these much maligned Indians as stereotypical "bad Indians." Their kind of imprudent judgment is today often chided by those living com-

fortably with full bellies and not faced with the horrible leadership decisions that could spell violent death or starvation for their men, women, and children. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century various bands of Sioux faced these terrible choices too and ultimately cooperated with federal authorities, riding with the blue coats as scouts, auxiliaries, and even as US soldiers.[3] Thoughtful viewers wishing to know more about the tortuous history of the Pawnee can find the works of Pawnee authors James Murie and Gene Weltfish in a recently published Pawnee bibliography.[4]

The non-Indian characters present some striking contrasts as well. I've discussed this film with some colleagues who claim the whites in it were negatively portrayed throughout its three-hour running time. That type of generalization does not do justice to Michael Blake's subtly textured screenplay. In fact, the film is really about the transformation of the white soldier Lt. John Dunbar into the Lakota warrior Dances With Wolves. Kevin Costner's sensitive and convincing character transformation earned him an Oscar. What Blake has done with Dunbar's character is to assume that, as in the race- and class-conscious nineteenth-century James Fenimore Cooper leatherstocking tales, largely white American audiences will not endure a story centered around Indians only. Therefore a white central character is mandatory to capture audience sympathy. However, unlike Cooper's protagonist Natty Bumppo, a white frontiersman of common social origin, Blake at first sight provides us with another type of frontier hero, the "military aristocrat"—a hero who combines high status and potential leadership in Eastern society with the ability to both survive and triumph in the wilderness. This traditional type of frontier hero has a future in a post-frontier America beginning to evolve into a rather rigid system divided by class and race, based on land ownership and wealth. He has the resourcefulness and skills to fight and conquer Indians as well as the wilderness. He is supposed to be able to do this without developing savage traits nor forgetting that he is the agent of progress and order in the wild. But that is precisely what Costner's character ultimately rejects. Dunbar does the unthinkable: he breaks out of the rigid confines of the Frontier Aristocrat prototype. The widespread abhorrence of Indians and their wilderness empire shared by all classes of frontier whites is slyly

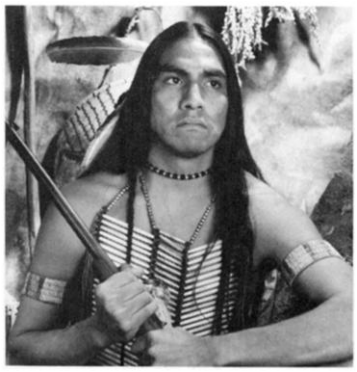
Ten Bears (Floyd Red Crow Westerman)

Kicking Bird (Graham Greene)

demonstrated by Blake's screenplay that has the illiterate and sadistic Private Spivey (Tony Pierce) stealing Dances With Wolves/Dunbar's journal of his gradual evolution into a Lakota Warrior and using it for toilet paper![5]

Stands With Fists is of course the other major non-Indian character in the story. However, it could be argued that she is in fact "Lakota," her family having been killed by marauding Pawnee (again!) and rather completely assimilated into Ten Bears's band as a mourning widow of a recently killed Lakota warrior. It is to the film-maker's credit that such a skilled and mature actress as Mary McDonald was cast in this pivotal role. Costner recently revealed his reasoning in selecting McDonald: "The key word in characterizing Stands With Fists was woman not girl. I wanted someone with lines on her face. That's not an easy thing to explain to a studio."[6] While the character is inherently likable, McDonald's skillful performance adds immeasurably to her appeal; strong yet vulnerable, possessing beauty without vanity. Especially noteworthy is the actress's authentic Lakota cadence and accent throughout the film. Her scenes where she relearns English are skillfully executed with pathos and conviction. For all of the above reasons she has gained the respect and acknowledgement of her peers who nominated her for the Academy's Best Supporting Actress category.

Other white characters in the film also show a great deal of variety. The flatulent mule skinner Timmons (Robert Pastorelli), despite limited screen time, manages to steal scenes from Costner. His role evokes humor, disgust, and ultimately pathos. One can only suppose it was someone of Timmons's character that prompted Thomas Jefferson to observe that when the Indians encountered the



Wind in His Hair
(Rodney Grant)

Black Shawl
(Tantoo Cardinal)

typical frontiersman in the wilderness it was hardly an elevating experience for the Indians. Screenwriter Blake juxtaposes Timmons's painfully detailed violent death with his unexpected plea that his killers not hurt his mules. Just when the audience is ready to see the dirty, disgusting, crude, and racist Timmons killed, Blake introduces us to an unexpectedly compassionate side of the character and leaves the audience the disquieting reflection on our eagerness to see this low-lifer killed. That scene also clearly shows us that in the Pawnee "Violent Leader" scalping of Timmons, there is no honor.

Even among the soldiers we find all types—good, bad, insane, and brutal. The enlisted men at the beginning of the film are shown to be tired, disgusted, and demoralized by the indecisiveness of their leaders. While we are witness to General Tide's personal pledge to save the "hero" of St. David's Field, the majority of the military leaders are shown to be cruel, brutal, or alcoholic. The suicidal Major Fambrough is quickly shown to be an isolated and insane alcoholic; he perhaps serves as a warning to Dunbar that the same fate awaits him at Fort Sedgewick. Blake perhaps went over the top with having this pathetic individual announce he had wet his pants! However, we can be reasonably sure that the audience clearly recognizes Fambrough's alcoholic insanity. Unquestionably the most brutal soldiers were to be found near the end of the film at the re-garrisoned Fort Sedgewick. The film-makers leave no question in our minds that this is a particularly unsavory and dangerous bunch. This group kills Dances With Wolves's magnificent buckskin Cisco. They repeatedly brutalize Dances With Wolves, and threaten to hang him if he does not lead them to the "hostiles." Finally, they kill the partly domesticated wolf Two Sox. The film-makers show us by this senseless act the all too familiar fear and hatred in the American psyche of the natural world. Yet even among this motley crew, careful observers will find Lt. Elgin (Charles Rocket). Perhaps out of military respect for a fellow officer of equal rank, or sense of common decency, he repeatedly acts to curb the excesses of enlisted men as well as the indifferent Major in command.

While the characters in Blake's screenplay are satisfactorily varied, some violence has been done to the historical realities in which this story is set. Blake's original novel centered on the Comanche of the Southern Plains, not the Lakota. According to producer Jim Wilson, the change of tribes occurred because the production company gained access to a 3,500-strong herd of buffalo available on the private ranch of former Lieutenant Governor Roy Houck of South Dakota. Yet we are still presented with a Lakota chief called Ten Bears. In fact the real Ten Bears (Par-Roowah Sermehno) was a Southern Plains Yapparika Comanche chief and signer of the Medicine Lodge Treaty of 1867.[7] One rather obvious overlooked transitional casualty of the relocation of the story to the Northern Plains is revealed when Ten Bears shows Dances With Wolves and Kicking Bird an aged Spanish morion and explains, "The men who wore this came in the time of my grandfather's grandfather. Eventually we drove them out. Then came the Mexicans. They do not come here anymore. In my own time, the Texans . . ." The Lakota could never have encountered this assemblage of Southern colonists on the Northern Plains. The real Kicking Bird was a principal chief (not shaman) of the Kiowas, yet another Southern Plains tribe. Blake is said to have fashioned the film's Kicking Bird after the Kiowa chief because he favored peace with whites. Ironically the real Kicking Bird was believed to have been poisoned by a rival Kiowa shaman/warrior called Ma Man-ti (Skywalker) for his role in imprisoning resisting tribesmen in 1875.[8] Perhaps the film's most glaring factual inaccuracy is the depiction of a winter military campaign by soldiers hunting for Dances With Wolves and Ten Bears's band in the winter of 1864. In fact no US Army winter campaign was undertaken on the Plains until November of 1868. Interestingly enough, this was Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer's 7th Cav-

alry massacre of Cheyenne at Washita Creek on Thanksgiving Day. That massacre, which killed 38 warriors and 67 women and children of the luckless Chief Black Kettle's people (earlier subjected to yet another massacre at Sand Creek, 1864) was portrayed with chilling authenticity in *Little Big Man*.[9]

In addition to factual errors, the film contains a number of unlikely absurdities. Audiences are asked to believe that the Confederate infantry at the St. David's battlefield in 1863 could not hit a lone Union officer at a slow gallop within 50 feet of its picket lines. Viewers literate in Civil War battlefield history will have difficulty reconciling the known Confederate accuracy in small arms fire with the film's myopic troopers. We are also asked to believe that an Eastern neophyte would need to inform a highly skilled, hungry, and presumably alert band of Indians that a thunderously noisy herd of buffalo was in their neighborhood. However, there is an intriguing alternative interpretation of these events (see box).

The costumes have received wide praise and were beautifully executed by Kathy Smith and Larry Belitz. Costume designer Elso Zamparelli had received a much deserved Academy Award nomination as well. Indeed they appear to have sprung to life from the works of nineteenth-century painters Karl Bodmer and George Catlin. And that may be precisely the problem: all of the Indian characters appear to be wearing their finest ceremonial regalia all the time, everyday! While it makes for colorful and picturesque village life, it certainly would have been impractical. In a similar vein we witness the marriage of Stands With Fists to Dances With Wolves taking place in the middle of the day, and in a white buckskin dress. The latter is certainly outside of acknowledged Lakota culture norms. Finally we are asked to believe that Army rifles buried in the ground for weeks and soaked from a fierce storm could be used functionally by Lakota who within hours of an impending attack had only used war clubs, bows and arrows, and lances. It makes for great drama but presses the limits of our willing suspension of disbelief.

A little acknowledged aspect of the appeal this film has for both Indian and non-Indian audiences is its sly sense of humor. A good part of that humor is at the expense of non-Indians. Nervous chuckles are heard among audiences as the mad Major Fambrough scavenges through his bottle-laden "files" and disjointedly converses with a bewildered and shocked Lt. Dunbar. We are disgustingly amused by the ill-mannered ignorance of the mule skinner Timmons and his bizarre behavior. Costner himself provides a good many laughs. Audiences are delighted with Dunbar's buffalo pantomime and coffee-grinding antics as he desperately attempts to communicate with an incredulous Lakota visiting party. Indians in the audience are especially amused by Dunbar's perplexed reaction to the Lakota ritual of eating the raw buffalo liver following Dunbar's kill.

Perhaps director Costner's best remembered amusing visuals are a series of delightful sight jokes centered around the many Lakota attempts to steal Dunbar's magnificent buckskin mare Cisco. Much of the humor here is in fact at the expense of the Indians. A naked Lt. Dunbar confronts a startled Kicking Bird and causes him to flee. A trio of Lakota youth led by Smiles A Lot gallop away leading Cisco and boasting of their soon-to-be-acknowledged warrior status when abruptly their dreams of glory are literally yanked out of their hands and instead of acclaim, they consequently face a whipping. Even Wind in His Hair has Cisco's persistent loyalty to Lt. Dunbar thwart his best efforts to capture the prized mount. Yet the best belly laugh of this running gag is the delayed realization that during one of the attempts to steal Cisco, Dunbar has knocked himself unconscious on the low door jamb of his Fort Sedgewick sod house.

Perhaps in the same vein, although in this instance made ironically poignant, is Wind In His Hair's boastful soliloquy, "When I heard that more whites are coming, more than can be counted, I wanted to laugh. We took 100 horses from those people, there was no honor in it. They don't ride well, they don't shoot well, they're dirty. They have no women, no children. They could not even make it through one winter in our country. And these people are said to flourish? I think they will be dead in ten years." These moments of humor relieve the tension of early contact and eventual hunted lives that the Indians, we all know, were inevitably subjected to.

The film's phenomenal popularity can be attributed to a number of factors. Thoughtful viewers are conscious of the film's powerfully evocative images of our country in the mid-nineteenth century,

struggling with the persistent issue of slavery and the ubiquitous "Indian Problem." Those problems have unrelentingly dogged the American psyche for over 100 years and remain largely unresolved to this day. But perhaps more to the point, the character of Lt. Dunbar is very appealing to today's audience precisely because he is a 1990s man, not an 1860s white man. Dunbar is for the Baby Boomer generation the disillusioned soldier seeking personal redemption in a wilderness experience. In the process he is literally transformed before our eyes from an Army officer to a Lakota warrior. He tells the quietly deranged Major Fambrough that he wants to be stationed in the west to "see the frontier . . . before it's gone." That simple childlike desire touches an unspoken yearning in many Americans, young and old. Who can blame Dunbar for wanting to escape the mass killing of the Civil War battlefields?

Confronting the solitude of Fort Sedgewick we are only provided with a presumption that the military post had been abandoned, not plundered by Indians. Actually the film-makers reportedly filmed a segment showing the nearly starving and desertion-ridden garrison abandoning the fort. Nevertheless, as Dunbar surveys his post we are treated to an elevated back panning shot revealing a disturbing foreground scene of the former soldiers' hovels burrowed in the hill, a fouled water source littered with trash and partially devoured animal carcasses. It is clear the white men from the East have been reduced to a condition that is truly barbaric by their attempt to attempt to conquer the Indians and their natural world. We witness Lt. Dunbar cleaning up the animal carcasses and the trash and filling in the burrow holes, just as sensible Americans everywhere work to heal the ecological mess the first wave of Euro-Americans have left in their frenzy to possess the American landscape. Still, Lt. Dunbar's growth in ecological consciousness and personal transformation into a "native" is gradual and incremental. First his beard, then his jacket, his hat, and then his moustache is exchanged for Lakota breastplate armor, knife, and long hair with feathers. His journal entries speak of his awe and love of this new territory, though he habitually longs for company. Done entirely on location, Dean Semler's stunning cinematography effectively captures the unspoiled plains biosphere. It becomes apparent to Dunbar and the audience that he can find an unexpected satisfaction in relationships with animals (Two Sox and Cisco) as well as the natural world around him. His first instinct upon seeing the wolf later called "Two Sox" is to raise his rifle and kill it. Only as he pauses do we begin to realize he is truly changing, perhaps driven by loneliness to allow the magnificent predator to live.

The pivotal event in Dunbar's transformation is just prior to the magnificently photographed buffalo hunt. As Ten Bears's band approach the herd they come upon two dozen buffalo carcasses, shot for their hides with the bodies left to rot upon the plains. Although the mass slaughter of buffalo became rampant a few years later, the scene evokes strong emotions—we know this is only the beginning. Dunbar notes in his journal, "Who would do such a thing? The field was proof enough that it was a people without value and without soul, with no regard for Sioux rights. The wagon tracks leading away left little doubt, and my heart sank as I knew it could only be white hunters." Not seen in the theatrical release is a scene of Dunbar coming upon Ten Bears's hunting camp as a scalp dance is in progress. Fresh white scalps are seen and the suggestion is that the white buffalo hunters have been discovered and killed.

In the buffalo hunt audiences are treated to a sight not witnessed for over 120 years. To be sure it was for Native Americans the high point of the movie. Bareback Lakota hunters are shown charging among a thunderous avalanche of large and dangerous bison. Non-Indians are shown that this too is a part of the natural order, a world of predator and game animals. In the feasting and celebrations that follow, we see Dunbar begin to exchange his uniform for native attire. When Dunbar returns to Fort Sedgewick he builds a fire and dances around it alone. Powerful drum beats rhythmically signal a deeper transformation of Dunbar as he joins in the rhythm of the earth and perhaps harks back to a race memory of his own neolithic ancestors.

It is the next day that Kicking Bird gives Dunbar his Indian name, Dances With Wolves, after the Indians witness his extraordinary relationship with the wolf Two Sox. Interestingly enough, it is the white captive Stands With Fists who mentors and entices Dances With Wolves deeper into Lakota culture, teaching him the language and thus opening up communication between the Indians

and this newcomer to their land. The significance of this should not be underestimated. Those who wish to physically and spiritually embrace the land must first learn how from its native people. When Dances With Wolves and Stands With Fists first embrace near a stream we cannot ignore the cattail pollen that fills the air around them—symbolizing germination of their new love for one another and also a new ecological consciousness among the Euro-Americans who have embraced the Indians. Their marriage follows and represents not only the union of the white woman who had preceded Dunbar in her own transformation into an "Indian woman," but also a final rite of passage of Dances With Wolves into a tribal citizen.

Yet another scene missing from the theatrical release occurred after the marriage. In this instance, Kicking Bird and Dances With Wolves encounter a sacred forested area that whites had recently despoiled. The bloated bodies of dozens of small animals killed for target practice swarming with flies, half-consumed deer, and empty whisky bottles littered the landscape. It was this senseless carnage that ultimately prompts Dances With Wolves to tell Kicking Bird that whites will be coming, "more than can be counted, . . . like the stars." When this frightening specter is revealed to Ten Bears he seems unable to grasp the terrible physical and ecological carnage that we know will eventually envelop the Lakota and all other Indians.

Perhaps because that scene was excised from the print of the film the public saw, the shock value of the capture of Dances With Wolves by the regarrisoned Fort soldiers is more powerful. As if to underscore the ominous hints of the impending campaigns to ruthlessly exploit or destroy the winged creatures, those that crawled, the two-legged, and the four-legged, we witness the recently metamorphized Dances With Wolves/Dunbar captured after the soldiers heartlessly kill his beloved buckskin Cisco. In the brutal interrogation that follows, despite kicks, punches, and clubbing with a rifle Dances With Wolves refuses to cooperate in "hunting hostiles and returning white captives." We know Dances With Wolves has completely assumed his Lakota persona when he refuses to speak English to his captors. As he is being transported back to Fort Hays his brutal escorts stop long enough to kill his companion Two Sox. In a shot that cinematically tells us all we need to know, as this scene progresses the camera reveals that just behind the ridge on which Two Sox is killed a Lakota rescue party is tracking the soldiers. Naturally the brutal despoilers of Lakota territory are summarily dispatched in stylish Hollywood fashion. This is a very satisfying scene for 1990s audiences. The Indians on an ecologically moral high ground become a kind of environmental SWAT team for the future Americans.

If there is any lingering question about the meaning of all this personal transformation and evolution of ecological ethos among this new white man and woman who have internalized Lakota culture, it is confirmed in the film's final scene. Deciding his presence will only further endanger his Lakota brothers, Dances With Wolves and Stands With Fists sadly leave their mentors to their inevitable fate and strike off on their own, perhaps to search for an America where they can live in peace and flourish with a new ecological ethos. While exchanging parting gifts, Dances With Wolves tells Kicking Bird, "You were the first man I ever wanted to be like. I will not forget you." Indians know that no white man or woman can become Indian, but many of us hope those who have learned of our cultures and appreciate their unique humanity will be our friends and allies in protecting the earth and all of her children. An interesting postscript to this tale of personal transformation and rebirth of an ecologically sound ethos for the Plains has a parallel in real life. Currently efforts are underway to create a "buffalo commons" amid the failed federal-subsidized farming that replaced the great Plains buffalo range. Imagine, a huge area where buffalo could again roam free! Perhaps the Ghost Dance prophets were right: the buffalo may be returning after all.

While Hollywood has a dismal record of employing Indian actors and technical staff, *Dances With Wolves* has clearly demonstrated that an American Indian presence in a film can make it work. The Native American actors naturally lent an air of authenticity to the work. This viewer, like thousands of other Native Americans, remains mystified as to why Hollywood still continues to employ non-Indian actors in red-face to play major speaking parts (e.g., Trevor Howard in *Windwalker*). Many of us had hoped that Dan George's endearing performance of "Old Lodgeskins" in Arthur Penn's *Little Big Man* would throw open

the doors of opportunity for Indian actors. It didn't happen then, but happily today we again have a major film with a number of important and significant roles for Native Americans. Certainly Tantoo Cardinal, Nathan Lee Chasing His Horse, Graham Green, Rodney Grant, and Floyd Red Crow Westerman created memorable performances and demonstrated there is a significant pool of talented Native American actors out there. Responsible for a good deal of the authenticity of the Indian roles was South Dakota's Sinte Gleska Indian College Linguist, Doris Leader Charge. She is the Lakota linguist who translated Michael Blake's screenplay into Lakota, coached the actors in the language, and played a small role in the film. This was no small feat, since none of the actors spoke Lakota fluently. However, the Indian grapevine reports that among the Plains Indians it was the 24 Native American bareback stunt riders who charged in among a 3500-strong herd of buffalo (a feat that had not been accomplished in more than a century) who were the true heroes of the film. My Cheyenne and Comanche friends tell me the buffalo hunt alone was worth the price of admission. No doubt about it, Costner counted coup (gained honor by taking risks) on all Hollywood Indian movies and touched something deeply significant in the Plains Indian cultures with that magnificent buffalo hunt.

Some audiences and critics have commented on the violence in the film and called it excessive. Especially disturbing and painful to watch is the Pawnee killing of the mule skinner Timmons. In Stands With Fists's childhood flashback, we witness a hatchet murder of a white farmer. When Pretty Shield (Doris Leader Charge) crushes a Pawnee skull with a burning log and Stands With Fists shoots another Pawnee during an attack, we clearly see these women are not to be messed with. The soldiers at the end of the film are particularly sadistic and themselves meet a brutal end. Even youth get in the act; after being pistol-whipped Smiles A Lot kills the sadistic Sgt. Bauer by burying a hatchet into his chest to the hilt. As awful as these and other violent acts are, they hardly compare to the violence of the real American frontier. Despite a highly romantic and mythologized popular view of the American past, the American Indian frontier was an incredibly heartless, sordid, violent, and chaotic scramble by Euro-Americans to get something (Indian land and resources) for nothing. For viewers upset over this cinematic tip of an iceberg of violence that Costner reveals for the popcorn-eating masses, I suggest they stick to Roy Rogers westerns or similar pablum. Costner has reminded all popular culture consumers of the violent underpinnings of the American Indian policy.

Doris Leader Charge, Lakota linguist/actress

I suppose it is inevitable and perhaps *de rigueur* that comparisons will be made between Costner's epic and other recent films that prominently feature Indian culture and actors or themes. Thematically perhaps *Windwalker* (1973) makes the best comparison. That film also featured a mythological death and rebirth. Furthermore it also took pains to show Indian society in a positive light, where grandparents, children, and families dominate the portrait of Cheyenne society just prior to sustained colonial contact. While *Windwalker* does feature a touching love story, it is somewhat troublesome to Indians that its most important leads are played by non-Indians. Many writers have commented on the extensive use of the Lakota language in Costner's film, but it was not the first such use in Indian films; in fact *Windwalker* holds that distinction. (*Little Big Man* began using Cheyenne but soon switched over to English.) However, it is probably

A Shamanistic Allegory?

There is an alternative interpretation of Dances With Wolves that cannot be ignored by those knowledgeable about Native American shamanistic traditions. Costner's film can be interpreted as a shamanistic allegory of symbolic death and rebirth. From this perspective, Dunbar in fact "dies" in his suicidal ride before Confederate pickets at St. David's field, but not in the same manner as the spy in Robert Enrico's brilliant adaptation of Ambrose Bierce's *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* (1961). All of the film's events immediately following this "death" are part of his journey to the Land of the Dead. As this is understood in most tribal societies, there are a number of dangerous trials along the way. But perhaps more importantly, it is a similar symbolic death (coma) which precedes the acquisition of spiritual knowledge by individuals who are to become shamans. There are a number of intriguing clues that this could be a subtext to the surface story. In many Indian cultures the Land of the Dead is in this world, but at a distance in one of the cardinal directions. For instance, when Dunbar journeys to the West he stops in a field of wild wheat and carefully caresses the ripe stocks. Similarly, when we first encounter the Lakota shaman, Kicking Bird, he also stands among the wild wheat caressing it in exactly the same manner as Dunbar. Did he sense a new spiritual presence in his midst?

When the Lakota in council are discussing the appearance of a lone white man in their territory, the impatient Wind In His Hair argues in favor of going to Fort Sedgewick and shooting him with arrows and adds that if he has "power" (spiritual power) he will not be harmed. Did Wind In His Hair and others suspect this was no normal man? A neophyte shaman trains under the tutelage of a more experienced shaman, and we note the special relationship that Kicking Bird develops with Dunbar. In fact Kicking Bird is anxious to communicate with Dunbar to acquire knowledge that Dunbar may possess. Later Kicking Bird declares, "I see one white man alone, without fear in our country. I do not think he is lost, I think he might have medicine [spiritual knowledge/power]."

Later, as Ten Bears's band is becoming alarmed by their failure to find the buffalo, it is Dunbar who discovers the herd in a decidedly surrealistic scene. He fearlessly walks toward a thundering herd of buffalo charging at night in a blue, dream-like mist. Dunbar shares his sighting (vision?) with Ten Bears's band and it proves to be accurate.

The acquisition of native shamanistic power is commonly derived from developing a compact with an earth or animal spirit that appears in one's ecstatic journeys to the Land of the Dead or spirit world. Could the wolf, Two Sox, have been Dunbar's spiritual ally and assisted in his transformation from a normal man into a man of power? Sometimes Indian doctors emerge from trances and assume new names. Viewers will recall Kicking Bird's observation of Dunbar's highly unusual relationship with the [spiritually] powerful wolf and the coining of his (Dunbar's) new name.

The buffalo hunt seems to be the pivotal point of the film from many perspectives. One way of explaining Dunbar's unexpected hunting prowess is the "power" he may have received from his powerful predator ally, wolf.

Especially interesting in this respect is Wind In His Hair's revelation that Stands With Fists's first husband was his best friend. He then goes on to say, "It has been hard for me to like you. But now I think he went away because you were coming."

Did not Dunbar's secret power (hidden rifles) help the Lakotas defeat their Pawnee enemies? When native societies were on the verge of collapse because of deadly introduced diseases and the destruction of native land and resources, new religious leaders arose who recombined old religious elements with new moral teachings. The Pueblo shaman Pope, the Shawnee prophet Tenskawatawa, and the Paiute Wovoka led messianic religious movements to morally revitalize their suffering people. The Ghost Dance is for many Americans the most familiar of these movements. When Dances With Wolves decides to leave Ten Bears's people he declared, "I must go . . . I must try and talk to those who would listen."

Could Dances With Wolves be the messiah the New Agers are seeking to lead the white man back to a balanced physical and spiritual embrace with the earth, our mother? E. D. C.

the brooding and melancholy American Playhouse epic *Roanoak* (1986) that best utilized an Indian language effectively to demonstrate communication problems between whites and America's native people.

A film that may not be considered by critics as an Indian film but nevertheless shows some important links to mainstream Indian films is Clint Eastwood's *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1975). This last great American Western was adapted from Cherokee writer Forrest Carter's novel *Gone to Texas*. On the surface it is about an embittered and extremely violent Civil War guerilla's attempt to escape the madness of the Reconstruction South. It could be interpreted as another attempt to retell the familiar story of a lone white man on the Indian frontier who ultimately attracts an ethnically diverse following, ultimately makes peace with local Indians, and finds physical and spiritual refuge in that diverse milieu. Especially memorable in the Phillip Kaufman–Sonia Chernuss adaptation of Carter's story is the charming performance of Dan George as Confederate Cherokee Lone Watie and Will Sampsom in a powerful and menacing role as the Comanche chief Ten Bears.

One can almost feel sorry for the "creative talents" that recently completed the four-hour miniseries adaptation of Evan S. Connell's *Son of Morning Star* (1991). This utterly boring, dramaless, flat, one-dimensional, and totally humorless attempt to tell the story of Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer's career and his fateful encounter at Little Big Horn is a lesson for film-makers everywhere. While it was laudable for its conscientious attempt to give an even-handed account of the clash of Americans and Plains Indians, its Indians were not allowed to speak. All native reactions and motivations are relegated to a voice-over narration (Buffy St. Marie) that instead of providing insights further isolates the Indians by denying them a voice in history. It is perhaps symptomatic of the contempt network moguls hold for their audiences. In contrast, PBS programmers offered the haunting *Roanoak* where more than two-thirds of the film is in the Chippewa dialect.

Unquestionably the film that invites most comparison is Arthur Penn's 1970 classic *Little Big Man*. Again we find the theme of a white man encountering the Indians and discovering their humanity. Yet that bawdy parody of the American frontier only focused on Indians for less than one third of its screen time. The real similarities of the two films lie in their unusual juxtaposition of humor and drama. Jack Crabbe's humorous sexual encounter with his wife's three sisters is immediately followed by Custer's murderous attack upon the Cheyenne camp at Washita River where his wife and newborn child are massacred along with many others. In a similar vein, *Dances With Wolves* invites us to laugh both with and at the ignorant mule skinner Timmons only to shortly witness his frightening murder by Pawnee. Both films featured an elaborate and memorable set piece; for Costner it was the buffalo hunt, in Arthur Penn's film it was the re-enactment of the Battle of Greasy Grass (Custer's Last Stand). However, significant differences exist. Penn's film was made at the height of the Vietnam War and emphasized the military assault on America's native peoples. Costner's film on the other hand is concerned with the re-establishment of a spiritual and ecologically sound American ethic with which Euro-Americans can enter the twenty-first century. Costner has been widely quoted as calling his film his personal love letter to the past. It also seems to offer one artist's optimistic blueprint for a new America, where a spiritually based and ecologically sound future awaits those willing to learn from this land's first children.

EDWARD D. CASTILLO

Notes

1. Costner, Kevin et al, *Dances With Wolves, The Illustrated Story of the Epic Film*. New York: New Market Press, 1990.
2. Miles, William. "Enamored with Civilization: Isaac McCoy's Plan for Indian Reform." *Kansas Historian* Vol. 38, 1972: 268–286.
3. Dunlay, Thomas W. *Wolves for the Blue Soldiers, Indian Scouts and Auxiliaries with the United States Army, 1860–90*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987.
4. Blaine, Martha Royce. *The Pawnees: A Critical Bibliography*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979.
5. Drinnon, Richard. *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian Hating and Empire Building*. New York: New American Library, 1980.
6. Costner, ibid., 44.
7. Utley, Robert M. *Frontier Regulars, The United States Army and the Indian, 1866–1891*. New York: Macmillan, 1973.
8. Nye, Wilber S. *Bad Medicine and Good, Tales of the Kiowas*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962.
9. Utley, ibid., 150–156.

Gargantuan! Colossal! Stupendous!

The Annual *FQ* Film Book Roundup

Once more we undertake to give review coverage to the entire output of English-language film books for the past year (except, of course, for books we have already reviewed). Thanks to the heroic efforts of our Book Review Editor, David Desser, we are more current than in previous years —though a good many works are still in the hands of reviewers. But we have discovered, in making up this issue, that we again cannot squeeze all the reviews on hand within its covers; some will have to be carried over to the Fall issue. E. C.

Autobiographies & Biographies

How I Made a Hundred Movies in Hollywood and Never Lost a Dime

By Roger Corman with Jim Jerome. New York: Random House, 1990.

Grist for Joe Bob Brigg's column may continue into the twenty-first century, but surely Roger Corman was the last of the great "B" men. He found tidy profits in the most dismal Japanese disaster footage, and shot his own first puppet monster through a cloudy fishtank. History unfolds here in tasty detail. Floor time on *The Little Shop of Horrors* consumed two days on a leftover set. *Bucket of Blood* required five. Add in *Creature from the Haunted Sea* and you've used up one pair of work weeks. Much of *The Terror* wasn't even slated; the outtakes went into *Targets*.

Yet more interesting is the "Corman School" toward whose graduates he assumes the posture of a gruff Mr. Chips. To be sure, commercial filmmakers often start as gofers and flunkie help, but unlike most employers, Corman recognized talent, assigned it real responsibility, and played teacher. *How I Made a Hundred Movies* is flecked with testifying interviews: Coppola, Bogdanovich, Scorsese, Nicholson, John Sayles, Mike Conners. With them and with others, Corman made deals. Ron Howard could direct a script of his own if it was a good one and if he'd act in *Eat My Dust*. De Niro and Shelley Winters gave their all to *Bloody Mama* because the parts were so good.

What did apprentices learn? Dennis Hopper was given an Arriflex and commissioned to shoot falling water at Hoover Dam for a flood sequence. Hopper stayed three days and squeezed in material for his UCLA thesis film on the Civil War. Pure Corman. How to do a cycle chase on a fifty-yard, T-shaped Nike missile site arena? Corman had faced a similar problem in his Poe films; they all used the same castle exterior. Paint barrels and plywood sheets in different colors, sporting different logos, he told Allan Arkush. Organize them into different backgrounds to setups at varied angles. Other students learned the arts of exploitation. Corman ads and trailers have the look of nineteenth-century theater posters with key scenes and phrased appeals that preceded any scriptwriting. The Medical Series (*Student Nurses*, *Night Call Nurses* ("It's always harder at night for the Night Call Nurses") adhered to patterns of nudity, action, violence (not too much), a humorous nurse, a kinky nurse, a socially conscious nurse (the ethnic one).

It sounds a lot like pulp magazine formula. Tight, fast plots are supported by quickly drawn, sometimes goofy characterization, all wrapped inside lurid covers: fast times at Corman School. "My own bias was for a moving camera. I always liked camera movements to lead people into and through scenes. The point-of-view (POV) was always a key in heightening tension. The critical shots then are

with the camera in front of the actor, tracking back as he moves forward and then the POV reverse shot along the same dolly track, as the camera 'sees' what he sees. And I would mix up the angles and distances, keeping the camera in motion." (80) "In every shot there is motion and compositional depth —members riding a chopper and running in the background, others partying with their women in the middle distance, and a few . . . dancing in the foreground." (137) The testimonies corroborate. Jonathan Kaplan: "Roger was wonderful. He had a yellow pad with about thirty neatly written, very specific notes on it. He read me his notes and that was the last time I've ever gotten specific notes from anybody on a movie. He suggested places where I could speed the film up by double-cutting between two people in a dialogue. He told me places where we could cut three frames. Find me one executive in the studios who would know the difference." (188) Martin Scorsese says that at NYU he was trained to worship *Wild Strawberries*, lighting candles at strategic Bergman shrines. "I studied *Wild Angels* in movie theaters." (184)

After enumerating his Academy awards and balancing his bankbook, Corman makes a rather self-conscious feint in the final pages, jockeying for positioning in the auteurist canon. On reflection, he is all his most successful characters: Frankenstein's monster, Roderick Usher, The Man With X-Ray Eyes, Baron von Richthofen, the Little Guy in the florist shop. In fact, Corman's critical enthusiasts veer elsewhere. Tony Rayns notes that he has developed "a rich colour expressionism, a highly mobile camera-style full of Ophulsian tracking shots, and a carefully circumscribed range of imagery based on the natural elements." Gary Morris believes that Corman's color betrays a rotten, overripe, decayed world, and his disinclination to direct actors constitutes "another paradigm for the quest for meaning." Shows what a good eye and superb audience instinct will get you. JOHN FELL

Coppola

By Peter Cowie. New York: Scribner's 1990. $22.95

Cowie's biography of Coppola is actually two events in one. The first is the book itself and its genre: the popular film-maker biography, aimed at an audience that wants to read about films in a particularly "entertaining" way that communicates the excitement and difficulties of film-making and provides a description of the films produced, along with an appropriate amount of backstage gossip and behind-the-scenes stories. The genre provides entertainment without much theory or analysis, imposing little upon its audience and demanding even less. This genre of film book parallels, roughly, the experience of movie watching itself. Its prose is seamless and chatty, untroubled by a demanding style or academic introspection, generating a story that seems to float into presence. In the words of a *New York Times* book reviewer, writing about another title: this book is "smartly written . . . no long-winded theories or footnotes about What It All Means. . . . " Unfortunately "smartly" does not mean smart and, without theories, long-winded or short, the book becomes a flat stage on which to celebrate its subject.

That subject (the book's other event) is stereotyped as an extraordinary figure of contemporary film, just short of heroic—not tragic, certainly—though somewhat melodramatic: earnest, misunderstood, never yielding completely to necessity, always dusting himself off from his last failure, ready to go at it again. Francis Ford Coppola, America's once and future film-maker, the man who would be myth.

There are, in fact, three Coppolas who emerge from Cowie's biography. One is the former prodigy who made three of the most interesting, carefully articulated films of the seventies: the two *Godfathers* and *The Conversation*. Another is the mogul, the producer who wanted to create a contemporary simulacrum of the old Hollywood studio (updated with hi-tech equipment) that would originate, produce, and distribute films. It would be just like Hollywood, but located in San Francisco, and offer a creative freedom the old studios could never manage. Finally, there is Coppola the artist, misunderstood (of course), unwilling to be constrained by economics, believing that self-confidence always foreshadows imagination and that belief is as important as execution.

"I know that the amounts of money I deal in seem unreal to most people—they do to me as well; but please always remember that I work in these amounts because I am willing to risk everything for my work." (158) Coppola wrote this in a 1977 staff

with the camera in front of the actor, tracking back as he moves forward and then the POV reverse shot along the same dolly track, as the camera 'sees' what he sees. And I would mix up the angles and distances, keeping the camera in motion." (80) "In every shot there is motion and compositional depth —members riding a chopper and running in the background, others partying with their women in the middle distance, and a few . . . dancing in the foreground." (137) The testimonies corroborate. Jonathan Kaplan: "Roger was wonderful. He had a yellow pad with about thirty neatly written, very specific notes on it. He read me his notes and that was the last time I've ever gotten specific notes from anybody on a movie. He suggested places where I could speed the film up by double-cutting between two people in a dialogue. He told me places where we could cut three frames. Find me one executive in the studios who would know the difference." (188) Martin Scorsese says that at NYU he was trained to worship *Wild Strawberries*, lighting candles at strategic Bergman shrines. "I studied *Wild Angels* in movie theaters." (184)

After enumerating his Academy awards and balancing his bankbook, Corman makes a rather self-conscious feint in the final pages, jockeying for positioning in the auteurist canon. On reflection, he is all his most successful characters: Frankenstein's monster, Roderick Usher, The Man With X-Ray Eyes, Baron von Richthofen, the Little Guy in the florist shop. In fact, Corman's critical enthusiasts veer elsewhere. Tony Rayns notes that he has developed "a rich colour expressionism, a highly mobile camera-style full of Ophulsian tracking shots, and a carefully circumscribed range of imagery based on the natural elements." Gary Morris believes that Corman's color betrays a rotten, overripe, decayed world, and his disinclination to direct actors constitutes "another paradigm for the quest for meaning." Shows what a good eye and superb audience instinct will get you. JOHN FELL

Coppola

By Peter Cowie. New York: Scribner's 1990. $22.95

Cowie's biography of Coppola is actually two events in one. The first is the book itself and its genre: the popular film-maker biography, aimed at an audience that wants to read about films in a particularly "entertaining" way that communicates the excitement and difficulties of film-making and provides a description of the films produced, along with an appropriate amount of backstage gossip and behind-the-scenes stories. The genre provides entertainment without much theory or analysis, imposing little upon its audience and demanding even less. This genre of film book parallels, roughly, the experience of movie watching itself. Its prose is seamless and chatty, untroubled by a demanding style or academic introspection, generating a story that seems to float into presence. In the words of a *New York Times* book reviewer, writing about another title: this book is "smartly written . . . no long-winded theories or footnotes about What It All Means. . . . " Unfortunately "smartly" does not mean smart and, without theories, long-winded or short, the book becomes a flat stage on which to celebrate its subject.

That subject (the book's other event) is stereotyped as an extraordinary figure of contemporary film, just short of heroic—not tragic, certainly—though somewhat melodramatic: earnest, misunderstood, never yielding completely to necessity, always dusting himself off from his last failure, ready to go at it again. Francis Ford Coppola, America's once and future film-maker, the man who would be myth.

There are, in fact, three Coppolas who emerge from Cowie's biography. One is the former prodigy who made three of the most interesting, carefully articulated films of the seventies: the two *Godfathers* and *The Conversation*. Another is the mogul, the producer who wanted to create a contemporary simulacrum of the old Hollywood studio (updated with hi-tech equipment) that would originate, produce, and distribute films. It would be just like Hollywood, but located in San Francisco, and offer a creative freedom the old studios could never manage. Finally, there is Coppola the artist, misunderstood (of course), unwilling to be constrained by economics, believing that self-confidence always foreshadows imagination and that belief is as important as execution.

"I know that the amounts of money I deal in seem unreal to most people—they do to me as well; but please always remember that I work in these amounts because I am willing to risk everything for my work." (158) Coppola wrote this in a 1977 staff

memo, and it leads me to propose a fourth Coppola who is present in the book, but never drawn center stage: Coppola the deluded self-promoter. Indeed, within a few years of this memo, all the other Coppolas—prodigy, producer, misunderstood artist—were pretty well finished and only the self-promotion was left, sans imagination. Certainly the intensity and the thoughtfully crafted *mise-en-scène* of those early three films was no longer in evidence in the films from the late seventies on. *Apocalypse Now* turned out to be more an event than a coherent film (and the event is nicely chronicled by Cowie); it collapsed under the weight of its spectacle and the tensions between its right-wing screenplay (by John Milius) and its director's center-left views. The films that followed are largely uninteresting, a fact even Cowie, always trying to put the best face on his subject's work, is sometimes forced to acknowledge.

The pain in all this comes from the fact that, writing what is essentially an authorized biography, Cowie can only superficially get down to the work of criticism. By refusing everything—theory, context, culture, critical analysis—that would reveal what is actually going on in Coppola's films, he is left only with naive admiration for his subject and extended plot summaries of his subject's films. I would argue that biographies, even authorized ones, ought to do more, and that film critics ought not be industry flacks. As entertaining as the production stories may be (and as useful as they sometimes are in providing background information to films), they do not replace serious, even troubling confrontation with the realities of the precipitous fall of Coppola's imagination, with the misplacement of ego, with the facts of Hollywood from the mid-seventies on that were simultaneously in conflict with Coppola's mogul fantasies and perfectly in sync with the banal films he made after *Apocalypse Now*.

Cowie is interested in the personal, as befits a biography, in effluvia, as befits a writer who can't quite seem to separate the important from the trivial (he actually quotes reviews of the wines made from grapes grown in Coppola's vineyards), but not in textual or cultural realities, not in the ways a life, its times, and the productions of both interact. Anyone who has seen the twitching corpse called *Godfather III* and turns to Cowie to discover how intensity of imagination, narrative felicity, and admiration for the image can have fallen so far will not find an answer. Though perhaps the unhappy blandness of this book may enlighten the reader about the state of contemporary American film culture as well as the unhappy chasm that exists between serious theory and criticism that has film as its subject and the popular literature that accompanies the movies. ROBERT P. KOLKER

Hollywood Auteur

Francis Coppola

By Jeffrey Chown. New York: Praeger, 1988. $39.95

Jeffrey Chown's book does not set out to reclaim the "authentic hero" Pauline Kael wrote about in 1974. Instead it details the battle of art versus commerce as exemplified in Coppola's career, and his struggle to balance ends and means. Chown also attempts to show why, amid the deal-making, compromises, collaborations, screw-ups, jealousies, and financial pressures of Hollywood film-making, the term "auteur" can be so misleading as applied to Coppola's career (or to that of any other Hollywood director).

The book starts with *You're a Big Boy Now* and ends with *Peggy Sue Got Married*, a time span of just about 25 years. Essentially each chapter splits into two. First comes a description of the production processes surrounding the films, and then an assessment of the films themselves. In the process Chown quotes from the most important articles written about Coppola, his style and his work methods, and then adds his own assessment, which is usually quite perceptive.

Gradually we see a man torn between rebellion and conformity, commercial success and the desire to be different. So we see the stylistic experiments of *The Rain People*, *Rumble Fish*, and *The Conversation* bow before the studio demands of *Finian's Rainbow* and *Peggy Sue*, and the humbling necessity to direct *anything* in order to repay a $50 million debt. And as we move from picture to picture we also perceive the fatal flaw. For all the style, for all the cinematic ability, there is an overall lack of vision. Unlike Bergman, or Antonioni, or Chaplin, Coppola has simply nothing to say—or so it seems from *Patton* to *Apocalypse Now*. This last

memo, and it leads me to propose a fourth Coppola who is present in the book, but never drawn center stage: Coppola the deluded self-promoter. Indeed, within a few years of this memo, all the other Coppolas—prodigy, producer, misunderstood artist—were pretty well finished and only the self-promotion was left, sans imagination. Certainly the intensity and the thoughtfully crafted *mise-en-scène* of those early three films was no longer in evidence in the films from the late seventies on. *Apocalypse Now* turned out to be more an event than a coherent film (and the event is nicely chronicled by Cowie); it collapsed under the weight of its spectacle and the tensions between its right-wing screenplay (by John Milius) and its director's center-left views. The films that followed are largely uninteresting, a fact even Cowie, always trying to put the best face on his subject's work, is sometimes forced to acknowledge.

The pain in all this comes from the fact that, writing what is essentially an authorized biography, Cowie can only superficially get down to the work of criticism. By refusing everything—theory, context, culture, critical analysis—that would reveal what is actually going on in Coppola's films, he is left only with naive admiration for his subject and extended plot summaries of his subject's films. I would argue that biographies, even authorized ones, ought to do more, and that film critics ought not be industry flacks. As entertaining as the production stories may be (and as useful as they sometimes are in providing background information to films), they do not replace serious, even troubling confrontation with the realities of the precipitous fall of Coppola's imagination, with the misplacement of ego, with the facts of Hollywood from the mid-seventies on that were simultaneously in conflict with Coppola's mogul fantasies and perfectly in sync with the banal films he made after *Apocalypse Now*.

Cowie is interested in the personal, as befits a biography, in effluvia, as befits a writer who can't quite seem to separate the important from the trivial (he actually quotes reviews of the wines made from grapes grown in Coppola's vineyards), but not in textual or cultural realities, not in the ways a life, its times, and the productions of both interact. Anyone who has seen the twitching corpse called *Godfather III* and turns to Cowie to discover how intensity of imagination, narrative felicity, and admiration for the image can have fallen so far will not find an answer. Though perhaps the unhappy blandness of this book may enlighten the reader about the state of contemporary American film culture as well as the unhappy chasm that exists between serious theory and criticism that has film as its subject and the popular literature that accompanies the movies. ROBERT P. KOLKER

Hollywood Auteur

Francis Coppola

By Jeffrey Chown. New York: Praeger, 1988. $39.95

Jeffrey Chown's book does not set out to reclaim the "authentic hero" Pauline Kael wrote about in 1974. Instead it details the battle of art versus commerce as exemplified in Coppola's career, and his struggle to balance ends and means. Chown also attempts to show why, amid the deal-making, compromises, collaborations, screw-ups, jealousies, and financial pressures of Hollywood film-making, the term "auteur" can be so misleading as applied to Coppola's career (or to that of any other Hollywood director).

The book starts with *You're a Big Boy Now* and ends with *Peggy Sue Got Married*, a time span of just about 25 years. Essentially each chapter splits into two. First comes a description of the production processes surrounding the films, and then an assessment of the films themselves. In the process Chown quotes from the most important articles written about Coppola, his style and his work methods, and then adds his own assessment, which is usually quite perceptive.

Gradually we see a man torn between rebellion and conformity, commercial success and the desire to be different. So we see the stylistic experiments of *The Rain People*, *Rumble Fish*, and *The Conversation* bow before the studio demands of *Finian's Rainbow* and *Peggy Sue*, and the humbling necessity to direct *anything* in order to repay a $50 million debt. And as we move from picture to picture we also perceive the fatal flaw. For all the style, for all the cinematic ability, there is an overall lack of vision. Unlike Bergman, or Antonioni, or Chaplin, Coppola has simply nothing to say—or so it seems from *Patton* to *Apocalypse Now*. This last

film in particular, which could have provided the great statement of the seventies in addition to being a visual tour de force becomes instead a poor exercise in political fence-straddling.

It was *The Godfather* that made Coppola a celebrity. Afterwards it would always be "A Coppola Film" above the title. Yet, as Chown demonstrates, the authorship of that film was clearly Mario Puzo's, even though the screenplay credit was shared. Here the mafia are warm, even likable at times; it is Puzo's humanistic benevolent view that dominates. But in *Godfather II*, again co-scripted by Puzo and Coppola, with additional material by Talia Shire, it is Coppola who wins out with his view of a cold, violent Michael Corleone lacking any humanity in his corruption. This may well be the authentic Coppola vision, Corleone as a symbol for capitalist-corrupted America with no warmth for family life or human kindness. This is an attitude, but it is no substitute for a fleshed-out creative vision.

None of the scripts evolved easily, and as Chown reveals the behind-the-scenes creative bargaining the question of artistic vision becomes moot. The pressures that a multi-million dollar feature puts on the creative process are well illustrated by the post-production struggles on *Godfather II*. Because of the rush to open it for the holiday season, scenes are cut, important narrative events are excluded, and the result is a feeling of confusion that time and more work might have solved.

One yearns for a last chapter on *Godfather III* to see if age has changed Coppola, but the book was finished before that last saga was completed. However, one is still left not just wiser about Coppola and the Hollywood system, but more aware of the limitations of traditional "auteur" theory as applied to American film. ALAN ROSENTHAL

Picture Personalities

By Richard de Cordova. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990. $26.95

Customary etymologies of the star system in the movie industry replicate a short litany involving public curiosity, economics (studios feared higher salaries), snobbery (theater actors on the bum), and Carl Laemmle, who beat out the Trust by packaging Florence Lawrence as a Name. In *Picture Personalities* de Cordova disputes these simplifications. Kalem, Edison, and Pathé were all publicizing their troupes by 1909. Stage actors soon found film work to be agreeably secure; preponderantly youthful, several of the better screen performers in time reversed the process and moved to Broadway. And the best paid theater idols quickly began earning even more on camera. Finally, as advertising whetted its skills yet more sharply, public curiosity became a negotiable factor.

Hereafter the book's attention centers around the Production of Desire, drawing largely on both commercial and film-fan journalism: the questions and answers about actors and actresses shift from the biographical to the anecdotal. Serialized fiction appears, and soon studio handouts, "behind the scenes" invasions sniffing out privacies to sell real or invented intimacy, the stuff of public lives. A star becomes a nexus of audience and industry, like a barker at a tent show. The study concludes with an overview of early twenties scandals, Arbuckle's in particular. While these goings-on were a field day for yellow journalism, *Photoplay* emerges not just curiously reticent, but bizarrely out of step. Fatty is interviewed on "Love Confessions of a Fat Man." He reviews Paris fashions in "What The Well-Dressed Man Will Wear."

Evolved from his dissertation, de Cordova's historical research swims on a sea of theory. The star as personality/the star as system is a Barthesian postulation. Enunciation, in de Cordova's employment of Metz, constitutes the production of categories (such as the Star) that define how a film shall be understood. Foucault models the analysis of institutional practice: the actor as functionary within a fictive structure/the actor as a subject independent of his screen appearance.

Depending on his or her proclivities, a reader may find these contextualizations more or less useful to the subject at hand. At best they integrate the study into broader fields of academic research. At worst they slip aside when historical facts are foregrounded. What *Picture Personalities* does not do (nor presume to do) is in any fashion to explore the phenomenology of Star performance, those nuances or blatancies of gesture, physiognomy, athletics, or sexuality offering themselves to exploitation, the salable dimension of a product, ex-

film in particular, which could have provided the great statement of the seventies in addition to being a visual tour de force becomes instead a poor exercise in political fence-straddling.

It was *The Godfather* that made Coppola a celebrity. Afterwards it would always be "A Coppola Film" above the title. Yet, as Chown demonstrates, the authorship of that film was clearly Mario Puzo's, even though the screenplay credit was shared. Here the mafia are warm, even likable at times; it is Puzo's humanistic benevolent view that dominates. But in *Godfather II*, again co-scripted by Puzo and Coppola, with additional material by Talia Shire, it is Coppola who wins out with his view of a cold, violent Michael Corleone lacking any humanity in his corruption. This may well be the authentic Coppola vision, Corleone as a symbol for capitalist-corrupted America with no warmth for family life or human kindness. This is an attitude, but it is no substitute for a fleshed-out creative vision.

None of the scripts evolved easily, and as Chown reveals the behind-the-scenes creative bargaining the question of artistic vision becomes moot. The pressures that a multi-million dollar feature puts on the creative process are well illustrated by the post-production struggles on *Godfather II*. Because of the rush to open it for the holiday season, scenes are cut, important narrative events are excluded, and the result is a feeling of confusion that time and more work might have solved.

One yearns for a last chapter on *Godfather III* to see if age has changed Coppola, but the book was finished before that last saga was completed. However, one is still left not just wiser about Coppola and the Hollywood system, but more aware of the limitations of traditional "auteur" theory as applied to American film. ALAN ROSENTHAL

Picture Personalities

By Richard de Cordova. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990. $26.95

Customary etymologies of the star system in the movie industry replicate a short litany involving public curiosity, economics (studios feared higher salaries), snobbery (theater actors on the bum), and Carl Laemmle, who beat out the Trust by packaging Florence Lawrence as a Name. In *Picture Personalities* de Cordova disputes these simplifications. Kalem, Edison, and Pathé were all publicizing their troupes by 1909. Stage actors soon found film work to be agreeably secure; preponderantly youthful, several of the better screen performers in time reversed the process and moved to Broadway. And the best paid theater idols quickly began earning even more on camera. Finally, as advertising whetted its skills yet more sharply, public curiosity became a negotiable factor.

Hereafter the book's attention centers around the Production of Desire, drawing largely on both commercial and film-fan journalism: the questions and answers about actors and actresses shift from the biographical to the anecdotal. Serialized fiction appears, and soon studio handouts, "behind the scenes" invasions sniffing out privacies to sell real or invented intimacy, the stuff of public lives. A star becomes a nexus of audience and industry, like a barker at a tent show. The study concludes with an overview of early twenties scandals, Arbuckle's in particular. While these goings-on were a field day for yellow journalism, *Photoplay* emerges not just curiously reticent, but bizarrely out of step. Fatty is interviewed on "Love Confessions of a Fat Man." He reviews Paris fashions in "What The Well-Dressed Man Will Wear."

Evolved from his dissertation, de Cordova's historical research swims on a sea of theory. The star as personality/the star as system is a Barthesian postulation. Enunciation, in de Cordova's employment of Metz, constitutes the production of categories (such as the Star) that define how a film shall be understood. Foucault models the analysis of institutional practice: the actor as functionary within a fictive structure/the actor as a subject independent of his screen appearance.

Depending on his or her proclivities, a reader may find these contextualizations more or less useful to the subject at hand. At best they integrate the study into broader fields of academic research. At worst they slip aside when historical facts are foregrounded. What *Picture Personalities* does not do (nor presume to do) is in any fashion to explore the phenomenology of Star performance, those nuances or blatancies of gesture, physiognomy, athletics, or sexuality offering themselves to exploitation, the salable dimension of a product, ex-

pressed in a range of petulant, bobbed-hair moues or swordsmen grinning at their tasks like chorus-girls, in short everything which encouraged the institutionalization of spectatorship.

Furthermore, movie stories themselves amounted to something more than vehicles on which to mount star performances. From the time of Theodore Roosevelt (who understood the movie camera better than de Cordova allows) to Fatty Arbuckle (who seems to have understood little of anything) evolutions in film narrative enjoyed other, subtle interplays with performance. Both Richard Dyer's *Heavenly Bodies* and Edgar Morin's *The Stars* appear in this book's bibliography but not in its thinking. JOHN FELL

Garbo

By Antoni Gronowicz. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990. $24.95

What a strange book this is! Gronowicz begins with Garbo bedding him at a Swiss chalet in 1938, after which she undertakes strenuous dance exercises because "I don't want to have a child." It took, Gronowicz says, some time to gain her confidence. Finally, he persuades Garbo to collaborate (this part is somewhat ambiguous) on a biography, "the story of her life as she told it to me in a voice I will never forget."

The author's credit page includes books of poetry, plays, essays, and four novels as well as seven other biographies, but *God's Broker: The Life of Pope John Paul II as told in his own words* (Richardson and Snyder, 1984) is curiously absent. In *God's Broker* ("based on over two hundred hours of conversation with the Pope") as in *Garbo*, biographical material is presented autobiographically, that is, in the first person. In the new book third and first person alternate, chapter to chapter, until Chapter 6 where Garbo (or "Garbo") takes charge uninterrupted.

One result is Remarks You Doubt Ever Got Remarked. Examples abound: "Every one of us lives his life just once; if we are honest, to live once is enough. In view of our short lives, it is not important who is writing or talking about others in derogatory terms. Death will crush the good and the bad, but history, history will select whom she wants" (Garbo, p. 15).

"I know it will be hard for you. I know America is not a just country. It is full of contradiction and misery, but we artists can get our everlasting two bits in. We do have some, albeit a small 'some,' opportunity to reform life, to reform art, to show others that we, with our vision, can fashion reality into success. To help us, we have very talented people from Europe and are now trying to help build" (Sinclair Lewis, p. 159). Thoughts You Doubt Ever Got Thought are too numerous to get into.

Much such stuff, of course, constitutes a particular sort of biographical convention; the way, for example, D. W. Griffith will think through some narrative innovation in a Robert Henderson biography. Yet the level and the extent of self-exposure the textual Garbo betrays in *Garbo* is uncommon. The book is not an As Told To. She's not credited on the title page, yet we're immersed in the most intimate relationships with figures like John Gilbert, Leopold Stokowski, Gayelord Hauser, and especially Maurice Stiller, described with such detail we must wonder that Garbo herself could recall it all, let alone parcel such matters out to a writer. Of course everyone's dead now.

And yet she emerges as an altogether consistent, unillusioned, candid confessor, who spent the greater part of her life reflecting on 21 years from 1920 to 1941, the working time. Some moments seem too real to have been made up. After hamming Camille's death scene with her at a party, Chaplin tells Garbo she's too tall for him. He needs a short actress with far less talent. At MGM her maid prints studio gossip on a brown paper lunch bag, and Garbo takes up printing, even her own name "as if to conceal my real character." The book seems to emerge as a mammoth, convoluted anthology of image reifications. Garbo on screen appears to be an assembly of many pieceworkers, not the least of whom is herself. Garbo off screen combines Stiller's tutelage, her own personality and invention, and studio hackwork. Finally, Gronowicz chronicles (reports? fantasizes?) Garbo dedicating herself to perpetuating her own public construction while she dreams of oranges, imagines herself shooting Hitler (who wanted to meet Garbo) so as to save her Swedish estate from the ravages of war. She talks with the dead, and enjoys

pressed in a range of petulant, bobbed-hair moues or swordsmen grinning at their tasks like chorus-girls, in short everything which encouraged the institutionalization of spectatorship.

Furthermore, movie stories themselves amounted to something more than vehicles on which to mount star performances. From the time of Theodore Roosevelt (who understood the movie camera better than de Cordova allows) to Fatty Arbuckle (who seems to have understood little of anything) evolutions in film narrative enjoyed other, subtle interplays with performance. Both Richard Dyer's *Heavenly Bodies* and Edgar Morin's *The Stars* appear in this book's bibliography but not in its thinking. JOHN FELL

Garbo

By Antoni Gronowicz. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990. $24.95

What a strange book this is! Gronowicz begins with Garbo bedding him at a Swiss chalet in 1938, after which she undertakes strenuous dance exercises because "I don't want to have a child." It took, Gronowicz says, some time to gain her confidence. Finally, he persuades Garbo to collaborate (this part is somewhat ambiguous) on a biography, "the story of her life as she told it to me in a voice I will never forget."

The author's credit page includes books of poetry, plays, essays, and four novels as well as seven other biographies, but *God's Broker: The Life of Pope John Paul II as told in his own words* (Richardson and Snyder, 1984) is curiously absent. In *God's Broker* ("based on over two hundred hours of conversation with the Pope") as in *Garbo*, biographical material is presented autobiographically, that is, in the first person. In the new book third and first person alternate, chapter to chapter, until Chapter 6 where Garbo (or "Garbo") takes charge uninterrupted.

One result is Remarks You Doubt Ever Got Remarked. Examples abound: "Every one of us lives his life just once; if we are honest, to live once is enough. In view of our short lives, it is not important who is writing or talking about others in derogatory terms. Death will crush the good and the bad, but history, history will select whom she wants" (Garbo, p. 15).

"I know it will be hard for you. I know America is not a just country. It is full of contradiction and misery, but we artists can get our everlasting two bits in. We do have some, albeit a small 'some,' opportunity to reform life, to reform art, to show others that we, with our vision, can fashion reality into success. To help us, we have very talented people from Europe and are now trying to help build" (Sinclair Lewis, p. 159). Thoughts You Doubt Ever Got Thought are too numerous to get into.

Much such stuff, of course, constitutes a particular sort of biographical convention; the way, for example, D. W. Griffith will think through some narrative innovation in a Robert Henderson biography. Yet the level and the extent of self-exposure the textual Garbo betrays in *Garbo* is uncommon. The book is not an As Told To. She's not credited on the title page, yet we're immersed in the most intimate relationships with figures like John Gilbert, Leopold Stokowski, Gayelord Hauser, and especially Maurice Stiller, described with such detail we must wonder that Garbo herself could recall it all, let alone parcel such matters out to a writer. Of course everyone's dead now.

And yet she emerges as an altogether consistent, unillusioned, candid confessor, who spent the greater part of her life reflecting on 21 years from 1920 to 1941, the working time. Some moments seem too real to have been made up. After hamming Camille's death scene with her at a party, Chaplin tells Garbo she's too tall for him. He needs a short actress with far less talent. At MGM her maid prints studio gossip on a brown paper lunch bag, and Garbo takes up printing, even her own name "as if to conceal my real character." The book seems to emerge as a mammoth, convoluted anthology of image reifications. Garbo on screen appears to be an assembly of many pieceworkers, not the least of whom is herself. Garbo off screen combines Stiller's tutelage, her own personality and invention, and studio hackwork. Finally, Gronowicz chronicles (reports? fantasizes?) Garbo dedicating herself to perpetuating her own public construction while she dreams of oranges, imagines herself shooting Hitler (who wanted to meet Garbo) so as to save her Swedish estate from the ravages of war. She talks with the dead, and enjoys

an exorcism performed by one of her lesbian lovers. On Artistotle Onassis's yacht, Winston Churchill froths because she won't let him see her breasts. Marie Dressler sings "Heaven Will Protect The Working Girl" at the start of their evenings together. Much of this is recounted with stolid humor: "[Gayelord Hauser] even gave me a diamond ring, while I consumed a tremendous quantity of juices." If Gronowicz invented much or all of Garbo he created a marvelous character.

In the course of a thoughtful and remarkably unfazed Afterword, Richard Schickel comments that Garbo booked screening rooms at the Museum of Modern Art so as to look at her old films. I once overheard Billie Holiday's maid mutter that her mistress just liked to sit in the apartment, smoke pot, and listen to the old records she'd made.

JOHN FELL

Razzle Dazzle

The Life and Work of Bob Fosse

By Kevin Boyd Grubb. New York, St. Martin's Press, 1989. $29.95

Kevin Boyd Grubb's book on the late Bob Fosse hop-scotches, as did Fosse, from stage work to the movies to television and back again. Grubb is a dance and stage critic and his research and writing on Fosse's films, while quite competent, is a little thinner than his work on the other aspects of Fosse's career. Grubb emphasizes, where appropriate, similarities and differences in the films from the staged originals, and, as he works through Fosse's career chronologically, is good at showing how Fosse's life and art interpenetrated: he brings out the autobiographical references in Fosse's last three films *(Lenny, All That Jazz,* and *Star 80),* with their increasingly scabrous attitude toward show business, especially well. The book is well researched, well written and, with its many illustrations, fills the function of a coffee-table memoir as well as document on Fosse's work. Someone should tell the copy-editors at St. Martin's Press, though, that it was Robert Kennedy, not John, who was assassinated during the filming of *Sweet Charity.*

GREGG RICKMAN

Karloff & Lugosi

The Story of a Haunting Collaboration

By Gregory William Mank. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1990. $35.00.

Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi have achieved legendary cult status. Mank's book carefully examines the eight films in which they appeared together, but also examines the personal and professional life of each actor. Karloff became an overnight star on the strength of his monster portrayal in James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931)—a role that Lugosi had turned down. Lugosi, of course, had been Universal's first choice after his success in the title role of Tod Browning's *Dracula* earlier that same year. From this point, Lugosi gradually plummetted in the profession, becoming a foil for the East Side Kids in two films, using his drug addiction as a desperate ploy for both attention and publicity, and ending his days as the star of Ed Wood's infamous turkey *Bride of the Monster* (1955) and the notorious *Plan Nine From Outer Space* (1956). Karloff, however, became a veritable elder statesman of early horror films, playing campy roles in Roger Corman quickies during the sixties and remaining reasonably active and popular until his death in 1968.

Lugosi would always refer to Karloff as "my rival." Karloff referred to Lugosi as "poor Bela." Through reminiscences from several who worked with both men, Mank manages to paint enlightening portraits of two intriguing actors whose lives and personalities were very different, despite their linkage in the popular mind. Mank presents the lives and careers of both actors as intertwining, and structures the book from this premise. Chapters are headed as per the work they did together up until their last film, Robert Wise's *The Body Snatcher* (1945). Along with a chapter entitled "Karloff's Last Act," dealing with that actor's final years, the text concludes with a chapter on "The Myth and the Rivalry," which gives attention to the legends that grew in the wake of the actors' deaths, detailing how a steady stream of "Lugosiphiles" rose up through the years since Karloff's death, arguing for Bela's superiority as the king of the horror genre.

Two appendices are included, the first listing

an exorcism performed by one of her lesbian lovers. On Artistotle Onassis's yacht, Winston Churchill froths because she won't let him see her breasts. Marie Dressler sings "Heaven Will Protect The Working Girl" at the start of their evenings together. Much of this is recounted with stolid humor: "[Gayelord Hauser] even gave me a diamond ring, while I consumed a tremendous quantity of juices." If Gronowicz invented much or all of Garbo he created a marvelous character.

In the course of a thoughtful and remarkably unfazed Afterword, Richard Schickel comments that Garbo booked screening rooms at the Museum of Modern Art so as to look at her old films. I once overheard Billie Holiday's maid mutter that her mistress just liked to sit in the apartment, smoke pot, and listen to the old records she'd made.

JOHN FELL

Razzle Dazzle

The Life and Work of Bob Fosse

By Kevin Boyd Grubb. New York, St. Martin's Press, 1989. $29.95

Kevin Boyd Grubb's book on the late Bob Fosse hop-scotches, as did Fosse, from stage work to the movies to television and back again. Grubb is a dance and stage critic and his research and writing on Fosse's films, while quite competent, is a little thinner than his work on the other aspects of Fosse's career. Grubb emphasizes, where appropriate, similarities and differences in the films from the staged originals, and, as he works through Fosse's career chronologically, is good at showing how Fosse's life and art interpenetrated: he brings out the autobiographical references in Fosse's last three films *(Lenny, All That Jazz,* and *Star 80),* with their increasingly scabrous attitude toward show business, especially well. The book is well researched, well written and, with its many illustrations, fills the function of a coffee-table memoir as well as document on Fosse's work. Someone should tell the copy-editors at St. Martin's Press, though, that it was Robert Kennedy, not John, who was assassinated during the filming of *Sweet Charity.*

GREGG RICKMAN

Karloff & Lugosi

The Story of a Haunting Collaboration

By Gregory William Mank. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1990. $35.00.

Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi have achieved legendary cult status. Mank's book carefully examines the eight films in which they appeared together, but also examines the personal and professional life of each actor. Karloff became an overnight star on the strength of his monster portrayal in James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931)—a role that Lugosi had turned down. Lugosi, of course, had been Universal's first choice after his success in the title role of Tod Browning's *Dracula* earlier that same year. From this point, Lugosi gradually plummetted in the profession, becoming a foil for the East Side Kids in two films, using his drug addiction as a desperate ploy for both attention and publicity, and ending his days as the star of Ed Wood's infamous turkey *Bride of the Monster* (1955) and the notorious *Plan Nine From Outer Space* (1956). Karloff, however, became a veritable elder statesman of early horror films, playing campy roles in Roger Corman quickies during the sixties and remaining reasonably active and popular until his death in 1968.

Lugosi would always refer to Karloff as "my rival." Karloff referred to Lugosi as "poor Bela." Through reminiscences from several who worked with both men, Mank manages to paint enlightening portraits of two intriguing actors whose lives and personalities were very different, despite their linkage in the popular mind. Mank presents the lives and careers of both actors as intertwining, and structures the book from this premise. Chapters are headed as per the work they did together up until their last film, Robert Wise's *The Body Snatcher* (1945). Along with a chapter entitled "Karloff's Last Act," dealing with that actor's final years, the text concludes with a chapter on "The Myth and the Rivalry," which gives attention to the legends that grew in the wake of the actors' deaths, detailing how a steady stream of "Lugosiphiles" rose up through the years since Karloff's death, arguing for Bela's superiority as the king of the horror genre.

Two appendices are included, the first listing

an exorcism performed by one of her lesbian lovers. On Artistotle Onassis's yacht, Winston Churchill froths because she won't let him see her breasts. Marie Dressler sings "Heaven Will Protect The Working Girl" at the start of their evenings together. Much of this is recounted with stolid humor: "[Gayelord Hauser] even gave me a diamond ring, while I consumed a tremendous quantity of juices." If Gronowicz invented much or all of Garbo he created a marvelous character.

In the course of a thoughtful and remarkably unfazed Afterword, Richard Schickel comments that Garbo booked screening rooms at the Museum of Modern Art so as to look at her old films. I once overheard Billie Holiday's maid mutter that her mistress just liked to sit in the apartment, smoke pot, and listen to the old records she'd made.

JOHN FELL

Razzle Dazzle

The Life and Work of Bob Fosse

By Kevin Boyd Grubb. New York, St. Martin's Press, 1989. $29.95

Kevin Boyd Grubb's book on the late Bob Fosse hop-scotches, as did Fosse, from stage work to the movies to television and back again. Grubb is a dance and stage critic and his research and writing on Fosse's films, while quite competent, is a little thinner than his work on the other aspects of Fosse's career. Grubb emphasizes, where appropriate, similarities and differences in the films from the staged originals, and, as he works through Fosse's career chronologically, is good at showing how Fosse's life and art interpenetrated: he brings out the autobiographical references in Fosse's last three films *(Lenny, All That Jazz,* and *Star 80),* with their increasingly scabrous attitude toward show business, especially well. The book is well researched, well written and, with its many illustrations, fills the function of a coffee-table memoir as well as document on Fosse's work. Someone should tell the copy-editors at St. Martin's Press, though, that it was Robert Kennedy, not John, who was assassinated during the filming of *Sweet Charity.*

GREGG RICKMAN

Karloff & Lugosi

The Story of a Haunting Collaboration

By Gregory William Mank. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1990. $35.00.

Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi have achieved legendary cult status. Mank's book carefully examines the eight films in which they appeared together, but also examines the personal and professional life of each actor. Karloff became an overnight star on the strength of his monster portrayal in James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931)—a role that Lugosi had turned down. Lugosi, of course, had been Universal's first choice after his success in the title role of Tod Browning's *Dracula* earlier that same year. From this point, Lugosi gradually plummetted in the profession, becoming a foil for the East Side Kids in two films, using his drug addiction as a desperate ploy for both attention and publicity, and ending his days as the star of Ed Wood's infamous turkey *Bride of the Monster* (1955) and the notorious *Plan Nine From Outer Space* (1956). Karloff, however, became a veritable elder statesman of early horror films, playing campy roles in Roger Corman quickies during the sixties and remaining reasonably active and popular until his death in 1968.

Lugosi would always refer to Karloff as "my rival." Karloff referred to Lugosi as "poor Bela." Through reminiscences from several who worked with both men, Mank manages to paint enlightening portraits of two intriguing actors whose lives and personalities were very different, despite their linkage in the popular mind. Mank presents the lives and careers of both actors as intertwining, and structures the book from this premise. Chapters are headed as per the work they did together up until their last film, Robert Wise's *The Body Snatcher* (1945). Along with a chapter entitled "Karloff's Last Act," dealing with that actor's final years, the text concludes with a chapter on "The Myth and the Rivalry," which gives attention to the legends that grew in the wake of the actors' deaths, detailing how a steady stream of "Lugosiphiles" rose up through the years since Karloff's death, arguing for Bela's superiority as the king of the horror genre.

Two appendices are included, the first listing

theater, film, and television roles for each actor, the second a filmography of their films together. There is no bibliography.

JAMES L. NEIBAUR

No Identity Crisis

A Father and Son's Own Story of Working Together

By Melvin and Mario Van Peebles.
New York: Fireside, 1990. $9.95 paper

Autobiography and other forms of intimate narratives, such as diaries, written correspondence, home movies, tape recordings, and family portraits express public facts. Personal records might seem commonplace and unimportant, yet if they are organized into a particular pattern the commonplace may reveal information of historical importance. Intimate narratives can also reveal information about a film's production history. Black film-makers have rarely exploited the autobiographical form to reflect on family relationships or to discuss the production or failed production of their film projects. Bill Gunn's *Rhinestone Sharecropping* (1981) and Cecil Brown's *Days Without Weather* (1983) are examples of black novels about film-making, but these stories are not considered as factual as if they were written in an autobiographic mode.

Melvin Van Peebles's *The Making of Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1972) was the first black-authored film journal to offer a detailed description of the making of a black independently produced film. The book describes the personal psychology of Van Peebles and his ongoing battle with the film industry's cultural gate-keepers. Imitating Melvin Van Peebles's entrepreneurism and black nationalism as reflected in *The Making of Sweet Sweetback*, Spike Lee wrote *Spike Lee's Gotta Have It: Inside Guerrilla Filmmaking* (1987), *Uplift The Race: The Construction of* School Daze (1988), Do The Right Thing: *A Spike Lee Joint* (1989) and Mo' Better Blues (1990); all four books describe his political philosophy and his business encounters with major studio executives. The autobiographical writings of Van Peebles and Lee are cultural products which promote the circulation of their films and reveal how they view the film industry. Such works offer raw material from which critics can assess the work of individual black filmmakers, note the particularities of repeating social patterns, and describe the individual experiences as representative of America in general and African-America in particular. It's in this way that *No Identity Crisis* warrants reading by scholars and the general public.

This book discusses the problems that Melvin and Mario encountered before and during the production of *Identity Crisis* (1990). (Since then, of course, Mario has gone on to the big time with *New Jack City*.) Melvin confesses his aspirations and fears for his son Mario who, Melvin believes, has been sheltered from economic hardships. Melvin writes about his fears about raising a buppie (a black yuppie), and wonders if it was wise to have sheltered Mario from the more virulent forms of racism and its effect—poverty. Melvin's self-reflection informs the reader of the tactics he will use to resist his son's quest to enlist Melvin as the director of Mario's film project. Melvin tries to toughen his son up for the "real" world which forced a younger Melvin to escape to Holland and then to France, and return only after he had made his first feature film. Melvin wears the hardened armor of experience which is shed in his fatherly thoughts about his son. Dialogically, the voice of Mario reflects on his father in a similar narrative mode. He recalls his father's efforts, which kept Melvin within the walls of racial limitations that were made in America and honored by Hollywood. Mario also notes Melvin's failure to find unhindered success because of racism. Between Melvin and Mario is a vast chasm filled with rivers of different black experiences and survival stratagies. Their philosophical differences separate them and materialize in their ideas about the filming of *Identity Crisis*.

No Identity Crisis fails to offer a thoroughly progressive view of women and fatherhood. The book presents Melvin as a very authoritarian type of black father and Mario as his passive son. Melvin and Mario express a sort of masculinist political inconsistency which permits contradictory signals. For example, there are several instances in the book which support Melvin's and Mario's earnest respect for gay members of their film crew. However, neither Melvin nor Mario show a similar sensitiv-

theater, film, and television roles for each actor, the second a filmography of their films together. There is no bibliography.

JAMES L. NEIBAUR

No Identity Crisis

A Father and Son's Own Story of Working Together

By Melvin and Mario Van Peebles.
New York: Fireside, 1990. $9.95 paper

Autobiography and other forms of intimate narratives, such as diaries, written correspondence, home movies, tape recordings, and family portraits express public facts. Personal records might seem commonplace and unimportant, yet if they are organized into a particular pattern the commonplace may reveal information of historical importance. Intimate narratives can also reveal information about a film's production history. Black film-makers have rarely exploited the autobiographical form to reflect on family relationships or to discuss the production or failed production of their film projects. Bill Gunn's *Rhinestone Sharecropping* (1981) and Cecil Brown's *Days Without Weather* (1983) are examples of black novels about film-making, but these stories are not considered as factual as if they were written in an autobiographic mode.

Melvin Van Peebles's *The Making of Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1972) was the first black-authored film journal to offer a detailed description of the making of a black independently produced film. The book describes the personal psychology of Van Peebles and his ongoing battle with the film industry's cultural gate-keepers. Imitating Melvin Van Peebles's entrepreneurism and black nationalism as reflected in *The Making of Sweet Sweetback*, Spike Lee wrote *Spike Lee's Gotta Have It: Inside Guerrilla Filmmaking* (1987), *Uplift The Race: The Construction of* School Daze (1988), Do The Right Thing: *A Spike Lee Joint* (1989) and Mo' Better Blues (1990); all four books describe his political philosophy and his business encounters with major studio executives. The autobiographical writings of Van Peebles and Lee are cultural products which promote the circulation of their films and reveal how they view the film industry. Such works offer raw material from which critics can assess the work of individual black filmmakers, note the particularities of repeating social patterns, and describe the individual experiences as representative of America in general and African-America in particular. It's in this way that *No Identity Crisis* warrants reading by scholars and the general public.

This book discusses the problems that Melvin and Mario encountered before and during the production of *Identity Crisis* (1990). (Since then, of course, Mario has gone on to the big time with *New Jack City*.) Melvin confesses his aspirations and fears for his son Mario who, Melvin believes, has been sheltered from economic hardships. Melvin writes about his fears about raising a buppie (a black yuppie), and wonders if it was wise to have sheltered Mario from the more virulent forms of racism and its effect—poverty. Melvin's self-reflection informs the reader of the tactics he will use to resist his son's quest to enlist Melvin as the director of Mario's film project. Melvin tries to toughen his son up for the "real" world which forced a younger Melvin to escape to Holland and then to France, and return only after he had made his first feature film. Melvin wears the hardened armor of experience which is shed in his fatherly thoughts about his son. Dialogically, the voice of Mario reflects on his father in a similar narrative mode. He recalls his father's efforts, which kept Melvin within the walls of racial limitations that were made in America and honored by Hollywood. Mario also notes Melvin's failure to find unhindered success because of racism. Between Melvin and Mario is a vast chasm filled with rivers of different black experiences and survival stratagies. Their philosophical differences separate them and materialize in their ideas about the filming of *Identity Crisis*.

No Identity Crisis fails to offer a thoroughly progressive view of women and fatherhood. The book presents Melvin as a very authoritarian type of black father and Mario as his passive son. Melvin and Mario express a sort of masculinist political inconsistency which permits contradictory signals. For example, there are several instances in the book which support Melvin's and Mario's earnest respect for gay members of their film crew. However, neither Melvin nor Mario show a similar sensitiv-

ity toward female crew members. Interestingly—and consistent with the treatment of other women in this book—Maria, the mother of Mario and former wife of Melvin, has only one page to record her reflections on the father-son film project. In essence, Maria is the unheard and displaced parent who, in many black female-authored texts, is the absent black father whose absence permits a sort of gynosexist utopic family. Most importantly, her near absence seems even more problematic when we learn that Mario spent his first fifteen years with Maria. Granted, the journal is about the father-and-son project but why is Maria absent from Melvin's and Mario's reflections? Even the Van Peebles family photo album, as constructed in the book, gives Maria one photograph while other family members have several.

The reader must either discount the book's misogynist passages or interpret its misogyny as revealing truths about the co-authors. The journal entries provide the necessary raw material from which better interpretations of black film culture will surface. Such interpretations do not always reflect what some of us would like to believe about black independent film-makers, black father-son relationships, and black successful men. Nonetheless, black cultural criticism must use this raw material to demystify the rhetoric of monologic discourses. Criticism must not create hierarchies of black oppression which might select the racial only to deny the equally important issues of class, gender, and sexual orientation within the African-American community. We must recognize, however, the importance of a national African-American character which speaks to the aforementioned issues. While mainstream critics tend to dismiss the historical contexts which permitted one race and sex to establish the criteria for standards and definitions of merit, progressive critics should reveal such myths of objectivity.

Finally, and acknowledging the book's political shortcomings, Melvin Van Peebles is one of the most important living figures of new American cinema while Mario is a popular cross-over idol, who articulates a bi-racial subjectivity and a buppie-ish class consciousness. Together, their book reveals a certain postnegritude moment when analysis must discuss the multiple concerns which constitute African-American life and experiences.

MARK A. REID

Blakewell, William. *Hollywood Be Thy Name: Random Recollections of a Movie Veteran from Silents to Talkies to TV*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1991. $35.00. As it was said of Ronald Reagan, Bakewell was ideally adapted to playing best friends, and he reminisces cheerfully. E. C.

Curcio, Vincent. *Suicide Blonde: The Life of Gloria Grahame*. New York: William Morrow, 1989. $19.95. The sad life of the slinky beauty who was married to both Nicholas Ray and his son (who proved a fine stepfather).

Davis, Ronald L. *Hollywood Beauty: Linda Darnell and the American Dream*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991. $19.95. A curious item: a standard Hollywood biography, but written by a professor of history (at SMU) and published by a university press. The interviews on which it is mostly based are termed "oral history," but it's the same old stuff. E. C.

Dunaway, David King. *Huxley in Hollywood*. New York: HarperCollins, 1990. $24.95. Surprisingly little is actually said about *films*, but Huxley's life impinged on various Hollywood figures (including Chaplin) and there is considerable background on the film community of the time. E. C.

Frasier, David K. *Russ Meyer—The Life and Films: A Biography and a Comprehensive, Illustrated and Annotated Filmography and Bibliography*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1990. $39.95. Frasier, in his introduction, "American Auteur," posits Meyer as the D. W. Griffith of the girlie movie, and its cousin, the "roughie," which latter—for good or ill—introduced violence into the basic T&A formula. This extra added seems more a turn-off than a turn-on in Meyer's films—connoisseurs may prefer the "purer," uncomplicated *Mondo Topless* (1966) to more celebrated Meyer extravaganzas like *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* and *Supervixens*. Though Frasier occasionally has fun with his subject, he's a little overserious. (In 1967, with *Common-Law Cabin*, "[Meyer's] cinematic vision crystallized.") The impressive bibliography comprises 1,148 items. Vividly illustrated. DON WILLIS

Goldenson, Leonard H. with Marvin J. Wolf. *Beating the Odds*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1991. $24.95. The "last living founder of television" tells his side of the story: movie beginnings, then head of ABC, and his role in bringing you not only *Peyton Place* but also *Roots* and other miniseries. Most of this is just high-flyer business tales, but historians may find some of it useful. An innovation: inserts of "other recollections" (by co-workers) to supplement the as-told-to basic narrative. E. C.

ity toward female crew members. Interestingly—and consistent with the treatment of other women in this book—Maria, the mother of Mario and former wife of Melvin, has only one page to record her reflections on the father-son film project. In essence, Maria is the unheard and displaced parent who, in many black female-authored texts, is the absent black father whose absence permits a sort of gynosexist utopic family. Most importantly, her near absence seems even more problematic when we learn that Mario spent his first fifteen years with Maria. Granted, the journal is about the father-and-son project but why is Maria absent from Melvin's and Mario's reflections? Even the Van Peebles family photo album, as constructed in the book, gives Maria one photograph while other family members have several.

The reader must either discount the book's misogynist passages or interpret its misogyny as revealing truths about the co-authors. The journal entries provide the necessary raw material from which better interpretations of black film culture will surface. Such interpretations do not always reflect what some of us would like to believe about black independent film-makers, black father-son relationships, and black successful men. Nonetheless, black cultural criticism must use this raw material to demystify the rhetoric of monologic discourses. Criticism must not create hierarchies of black oppression which might select the racial only to deny the equally important issues of class, gender, and sexual orientation within the African-American community. We must recognize, however, the importance of a national African-American character which speaks to the aforementioned issues. While mainstream critics tend to dismiss the historical contexts which permitted one race and sex to establish the criteria for standards and definitions of merit, progressive critics should reveal such myths of objectivity.

Finally, and acknowledging the book's political shortcomings, Melvin Van Peebles is one of the most important living figures of new American cinema while Mario is a popular cross-over idol, who articulates a bi-racial subjectivity and a buppie-ish class consciousness. Together, their book reveals a certain postnegritude moment when analysis must discuss the multiple concerns which constitute African-American life and experiences.

MARK A. REID

Blakewell, William. *Hollywood Be Thy Name: Random Recollections of a Movie Veteran from Silents to Talkies to TV*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1991. $35.00. As it was said of Ronald Reagan, Bakewell was ideally adapted to playing best friends, and he reminisces cheerfully. E. C.

Curcio, Vincent. *Suicide Blonde: The Life of Gloria Grahame*. New York: William Morrow, 1989. $19.95. The sad life of the slinky beauty who was married to both Nicholas Ray and his son (who proved a fine stepfather).

Davis, Ronald L. *Hollywood Beauty: Linda Darnell and the American Dream*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991. $19.95. A curious item: a standard Hollywood biography, but written by a professor of history (at SMU) and published by a university press. The interviews on which it is mostly based are termed "oral history," but it's the same old stuff. E. C.

Dunaway, David King. *Huxley in Hollywood*. New York: HarperCollins, 1990. $24.95. Surprisingly little is actually said about *films*, but Huxley's life impinged on various Hollywood figures (including Chaplin) and there is considerable background on the film community of the time. E. C.

Frasier, David K. *Russ Meyer—The Life and Films: A Biography and a Comprehensive, Illustrated and Annotated Filmography and Bibliography*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1990. $39.95. Frasier, in his introduction, "American Auteur," posits Meyer as the D. W. Griffith of the girlie movie, and its cousin, the "roughie," which latter—for good or ill—introduced violence into the basic T&A formula. This extra added seems more a turn-off than a turn-on in Meyer's films—connoisseurs may prefer the "purer," uncomplicated *Mondo Topless* (1966) to more celebrated Meyer extravaganzas like *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* and *Supervixens*. Though Frasier occasionally has fun with his subject, he's a little overserious. (In 1967, with *Common-Law Cabin*, "[Meyer's] cinematic vision crystallized.") The impressive bibliography comprises 1,148 items. Vividly illustrated. DON WILLIS

Goldenson, Leonard H. with Marvin J. Wolf. *Beating the Odds*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1991. $24.95. The "last living founder of television" tells his side of the story: movie beginnings, then head of ABC, and his role in bringing you not only *Peyton Place* but also *Roots* and other miniseries. Most of this is just high-flyer business tales, but historians may find some of it useful. An innovation: inserts of "other recollections" (by co-workers) to supplement the as-told-to basic narrative. E. C.

Jarlett, Franklin. *Robert Ryan: A Biography and Critical Filmography*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1990. $29.95. The intense and brooding Ryan was one of the seminal actors of Hollywood's late 1940s and '50s, appearing in a dozen or so of the most interesting films of the time (*The Woman on the Beach*, *Caught*, *On Dangerous Ground*, etc.). A sad-eyed liberal activist who avoided blacklisting by being, as he said, "an Irish-Catholic and ex-Marine," Ryan played against his true self many times as a racist (*Crossfire*) or genial psychopath (*The Naked Spur*). More interested in acting than in being a star, Ryan's work says more to us now than the performances of many of his better known contemporaries. Jarlett's workmanlike biography, clearly a labor of love, covers the ground well and is recommended to anyone interested in the era. GREGG RICKMAN

Jordan, Ted. *Norma Jean: My Secret Life with Marilyn Monroe*. New York: William Morrow, 1989. $18.95. Only Marilyn will ever know for sure, but this appears to be a genuine memoir by an early boyfriend who remained friends till near the end, and has an interestingly matter-of-fact perspective on the innocent sexiness of Norma Jean. E. C.

Keyes, Evelyn. *I'll Think About That Tomorrow*. New York: Dutton, 1991. $21.95. Married to Charles Vidor, John Huston, and Artie Shaw, Keyes has a lot to tell all about, which she does in a charmingly good-humored way. E. C.

McCabe, John. *Babe: The Life of Oliver Hardy*. NY: Citadel, 1990. $16.95. Those with fond memories of McCabe's first book on Laurel and Hardy, *Mr. Laurel and Mr. Hardy*, will welcome this biofilmography of Oliver Hardy. Very little of the material is repeated from that earlier work, and most of it is of interest. Highlights include the chapter on the Hal Roach silent shorts (1926 and 1927), in which the team of Laurel and Hardy was "just about to be," and the final two chapters. Although by 1952 their film careers had dwindled down to nothing, the pair enjoyed a second wave of fame as they toured British music halls, and American television picked up their old movies. DON WILLIS

Munn, Michael. *Trevor Howard: The Man and His Films*. Chelsea, MI: Scarborough House, 1990. $19.95 paper.

Pink, Sidney. *So You Want to Make Movies: My Life as an Independent Film Producer*. Sarasota, FL: Pineapple Press, 1991. $18.95. Life at the middle and lower levels of the movie industry.

Rico, Diana. *Kovacsland: A Biography of Ernie Kovacs*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1990. $19.95. Exhaustively detailed and consistently interesting, this biography of the multimedia performance artist —oops, I mean ahead-of-his-time TV comedian—will probably stand as the definitive work on Ernie Kovacs for some time to come. Has either commercial TV or video art produced anyone else as brilliant as Kovacs? I think not. Rico does a fine job in tracing the outlines of Kovacs's career, from radio to video to film, and describing how his creative processes worked. She is also aware of Kovacs's stature as the video counterpart to a natural cineaste like Buster Keaton, albeit within a much smaller compass. On the other hand Kovacs, unlike Keaton, never got a chance to make brilliant full-scale film comedies. Indeed, Rico makes the case that Kovacs's personal problems (related, I infer, in his inability to realize his talents in film as he had on television) contributed mightily to his tragically early death. Whoever ultimately does do the detailed aesthetic analysis of Kovacs that gives him the full artistic recognition he deserves will owe a debt to Rico's fine chronicle. GREGG RICKMAN

Sanders, Coyne Steven. *Rainbow's End: The Judy Garland Show*. New York: Morrow, 1990. $22.95. A great to-do, but perhaps worth it for Garland fans: a hundred interviews, endless business and personal detail. E. C.

Shirley, Glenn. *Hello Sucker! The Story of "Texas" Guinan*. Austin, Texas: Eakin Press, 1989. $15.95. Guinan's "image of self-reliant womanhood—a cowgirl in chaps with six-shooter in hand who could meet the bullying masculine world on its own terms"—propelled her through Triangle Pictures to her own studio. After this stage as a kind of female W. S. Hart, she became a singer and Broadway "hostess" during Prohibition. E. C.

Smith, R. Dixon. *Ronald Colman, Gentleman of the Cinema: A Biography and Filmography*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1991. $35. Women named their sons after him. Hollywood actresses (in a 1935 poll) named him "the handsomest man on the screen." On that screen, Ronald Colman was impossibly gallant and charming—apparently effortlessly so, as if gallant and charming were what he actually was, not just what he thought would pass. Smith's book is thorough and readable, if somewhat superficial, with some fine anecdotes on the making of Colman's films. Outstanding among the raconteurs: Neil Hamilton on *Beau Geste*, William Wellman on *The Light That Failed*. DON WILLIS

Thomas, Bob. *King Cohn: The Life and Times of Hollywood Mogul Harry Cohn*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1990. $12.95 paper. Reissue of the 1967 work. Perhaps useful for those thinking about rehabilitating the old-time Hollywood producers. E. C.

Thomas, Tony. *Errol Flynn: The Spy Who Never Was.* NY: Citadel, 1990. $18.95. In *Errol Flynn: The Untold Story*, Charles Higham arrived at the too-neat-sounding irony that, while Flynn, the Tasmanian devil, fought Nazis onscreen, in real life he spied for them. According to Thomas, the charges boil down something like this: Flynn knew someone (Hermann Erben) who knew some Nazis. Thomas examines the government documents which Higham employed to make his case and finds one Flynn confused with another, misleading partial quotations, suggestions of damning evidence in files where there was none, etc. The decade-old controversy occupies roughly half the book. The first half, which is also often interesting, if only indirectly related to the second, concerns Flynn the frustrated writer, who took the easy-money way out of his frustration—movie stardom —when he seems to have taken writing more seriously than acting. Excerpts from his notebooks suggest dimensions in his character which never, or rarely, showed in his screen performances. DON WILLIS

Tynan, Kenneth. *Profiles.* New York: Bessie/Harper-Collins Books, 1990. $14.95 paper. Reissue of a 1989 British book that collected all of Tynan's profiles, most famously perhaps his rediscovery of Louise Brooks.

Wynn, Ned. *We Will Always Live in Beverly Hills: Growing Up Crazy in Hollywood.* New York: Morrow, 1990. $19.95. This chronicle of life in movieland is surprisingly well written (by the son of Keenan Wynn): affluence, the sixties, drugs, sex, alcoholism like his father's, done with wry humor now well in control: "I had all the movie stars, and the best cars. I didn't know it, but at seventeen, I had peaked." E. C.

Criticism

The Social Documentary in Latin America

Edited by Julianne Burton. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990. $49.95 cloth, $22.95 paper.

Debates involving disciplinary "canons" have intensified over the last decade. In cinema studies, what Janet Staiger termed "the politics of the film canon" are largely enacted around feature-length narratives. Within the smaller universe of documentary film studies, a parallel canon has developed; the narrowness of the predominantly Anglo-American/Western European, male-produced documentary canon is currently being challenged. Here, too, a struggle is in progress—in the books that are published, purchased, and reviewed; in the print collections maintained by university archives and in commercial 16mm distribution; in the films screened and studied in our classes; in the titles available on videotape.

As Julianne Burton writes, "I question the value of attempting to substitute or supplement the prevailing ethnocentric canon, though if such canons are to be perpetuated, I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the formulation of more socioculturally representative criteria" (28). It seems to me likely that film canons in various permutations will exist, and that the work of Burton and her colleagues will contribute to reformulations of such canons. Through her published essays and a volume of interviews (*Cinema and Social Change in Latin American: Conversations with Filmmakers* [1986]), Burton has been instrumental in introducing the work of Latin American film-makers to English readers. She continues her leadership with this collection, through her lucid essay introductions, her translation of pieces written in Spanish, French, or Portuguese, and her authorship of three key essays.

Although only seven of the 20 essays in this collection are original, many have been revised and updated; others are printed in English for the first time. Several authors—Julia Lesage, John Hess, John Ramirez, and Burton—expand on their important contributions to Tom Waugh's *"Show Us Life": Toward a History of the Committed Documentary* (1984), which had heretofore been one of the only sources in English with a section of critical essays on Latin American documentary.

Burton organizes the collection in four parts. The first section, "Establishing Shots," presents three background essays, two written by Burton herself, one a general historical survey, with a cross-cultural "provisional" typology and a succinct presentation of the general issues under consideration in the volume; the second an elaboration of her earlier work on modes of address. The other general chapter, by Michael Chanan, considers typologies of Latin American documentaries, with a special emphasis on Cuban production, which Cha-

Thomas, Tony. *Errol Flynn: The Spy Who Never Was.* NY: Citadel, 1990. $18.95. In *Errol Flynn: The Untold Story*, Charles Higham arrived at the too-neat-sounding irony that, while Flynn, the Tasmanian devil, fought Nazis onscreen, in real life he spied for them. According to Thomas, the charges boil down something like this: Flynn knew someone (Hermann Erben) who knew some Nazis. Thomas examines the government documents which Higham employed to make his case and finds one Flynn confused with another, misleading partial quotations, suggestions of damning evidence in files where there was none, etc. The decade-old controversy occupies roughly half the book. The first half, which is also often interesting, if only indirectly related to the second, concerns Flynn the frustrated writer, who took the easy-money way out of his frustration—movie stardom —when he seems to have taken writing more seriously than acting. Excerpts from his notebooks suggest dimensions in his character which never, or rarely, showed in his screen performances. DON WILLIS

Tynan, Kenneth. *Profiles.* New York: Bessie/Harper-Collins Books, 1990. $14.95 paper. Reissue of a 1989 British book that collected all of Tynan's profiles, most famously perhaps his rediscovery of Louise Brooks.

Wynn, Ned. *We Will Always Live in Beverly Hills: Growing Up Crazy in Hollywood.* New York: Morrow, 1990. $19.95. This chronicle of life in movieland is surprisingly well written (by the son of Keenan Wynn): affluence, the sixties, drugs, sex, alcoholism like his father's, done with wry humor now well in control: "I had all the movie stars, and the best cars. I didn't know it, but at seventeen, I had peaked." E. C.

Criticism

The Social Documentary in Latin America

Edited by Julianne Burton. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990. $49.95 cloth, $22.95 paper.

Debates involving disciplinary "canons" have intensified over the last decade. In cinema studies, what Janet Staiger termed "the politics of the film canon" are largely enacted around feature-length narratives. Within the smaller universe of documentary film studies, a parallel canon has developed; the narrowness of the predominantly Anglo-American/Western European, male-produced documentary canon is currently being challenged. Here, too, a struggle is in progress—in the books that are published, purchased, and reviewed; in the print collections maintained by university archives and in commercial 16mm distribution; in the films screened and studied in our classes; in the titles available on videotape.

As Julianne Burton writes, "I question the value of attempting to substitute or supplement the prevailing ethnocentric canon, though if such canons are to be perpetuated, I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the formulation of more socioculturally representative criteria" (28). It seems to me likely that film canons in various permutations will exist, and that the work of Burton and her colleagues will contribute to reformulations of such canons. Through her published essays and a volume of interviews (*Cinema and Social Change in Latin American: Conversations with Filmmakers* [1986]), Burton has been instrumental in introducing the work of Latin American film-makers to English readers. She continues her leadership with this collection, through her lucid essay introductions, her translation of pieces written in Spanish, French, or Portuguese, and her authorship of three key essays.

Although only seven of the 20 essays in this collection are original, many have been revised and updated; others are printed in English for the first time. Several authors—Julia Lesage, John Hess, John Ramirez, and Burton—expand on their important contributions to Tom Waugh's *"Show Us Life": Toward a History of the Committed Documentary* (1984), which had heretofore been one of the only sources in English with a section of critical essays on Latin American documentary.

Burton organizes the collection in four parts. The first section, "Establishing Shots," presents three background essays, two written by Burton herself, one a general historical survey, with a cross-cultural "provisional" typology and a succinct presentation of the general issues under consideration in the volume; the second an elaboration of her earlier work on modes of address. The other general chapter, by Michael Chanan, considers typologies of Latin American documentaries, with a special emphasis on Cuban production, which Cha-

nan considers a "testing laboratory" for Latin American documentary in general.

The second section, "Wide Angles," concentrates on the relationship between documentary practices and political systems. Using revolutionary Cuba as his example, John Mraz demonstrates the association of dramatic artistic forms with dynamic periods of history. In his description of how the Salvadoran crisis has been represented from within, John Hess often refers to "image works," since the distinction between film and video becomes problematic in a climate of guerrilla war when material is reassembled in various forms for different audiences and contexts. Karen Ranucci continues the production-for-use theme in the history of her own project "Democracy in Communication," contemporary film and video works which Ranucci collected, edited, subtitled, and distributes in the US. Pat Aufderheide echoes Ranucci's claim that the hurdle of distribution exceeds that of production. (Burton provides a helpful guide to distributors for sales or rentals of films and videos discussed in the volume.)

"Texts in Close-up" offers close readings of celebrated Latin American documentaries. In a fine essay on the Argentine classic, *La hora de los hornos* (*The Hour of the Furnaces*), Robert Stam argues that *La hora* marks a high point in the convergence of two avant-gardes—the formal and the theoretico-political. Jorge Fraga, head of production at the Cuban Film Institute, offers an insider's analysis of editorial strategies in the production of the Institute's weekly newsreel. Also noteworthy is an intricate analysis of a short Nicaraguan film *Bananeras* (*Banana Plantations*). In a theoretically dense essay, John Ramirez examines the possibility of a dialogic mode of address that avoids recasting the Other in a representation system that replicates conquest ideologies. Writing in her characteristically accessible style, Julia Lesage reminds us that "The very notion of studying 'Third World' films elsewhere has to be approached with the same suspicion with which we view the tools and research of anthropologists" (345). Lesage's chapter concentrates on three pieces by women working in three different modes or contexts of production. Lesage, herself a videomaker, explores the relationships among formal choices, political goals, and social situations in media production. She calls for a wider distribution of works that, despite their cultural specificity, "speak to women viewers across national boundaries" (344).

The last section, "Beyond the Documentary/Fiction Dichotomy," challenges conventional distinctions. The dominant theme of the social uses of documentary continues in this section when John Hess returns to a piece he had written more than a decade before. Hess describes the experience of still agreeing with much he had written about *Giron* (*Bay of Pigs*) before he had much familiarity with Cuban films or Cuba, but in his revision he "greatly toned down [his] critique of the film's John Wayneism." Hess explains, "In the last ten years I have come to appreciate the empowering effect of military imagery for Third World people" (359). This last section offers a sense of the contribution Latin American films can make to an understanding of how cultural memory is created through the complex relationship between fictive and documentary modes of representation, as demonstrated in the hybrid forms analyzed by Burton, Ana Lopez, and Ismail Xavier, a Brazilian critic whose thoughtful essay on *Iracema* is worth special mention.

The essays in *The Social Documentary in Latin America* make an important contribution not just to our knowledge of Latin American cinema's documentary history and practices, but also to a larger sense of the place of cinema and video in a changing world. CAROLYN ANDERSON

American Political Movies

An Annotated Filmography of Feature Films

By James E. Combs. New York: Garland, 1990. $30.00

Almost all American films project aspects of our national dreams, desires, and values. That holds true for explicitly political films like Robert Altman's *Nashville* as well as for apolitical entertainments like Donen and Kelly's 1940s musical *On the Town*. For even when Hollywood films totally stylize or even trivialize the social world, they are capable of creating images, characters, and dialogue that illuminate elements of our collective life and culture.

nan considers a "testing laboratory" for Latin American documentary in general.

The second section, "Wide Angles," concentrates on the relationship between documentary practices and political systems. Using revolutionary Cuba as his example, John Mraz demonstrates the association of dramatic artistic forms with dynamic periods of history. In his description of how the Salvadoran crisis has been represented from within, John Hess often refers to "image works," since the distinction between film and video becomes problematic in a climate of guerrilla war when material is reassembled in various forms for different audiences and contexts. Karen Ranucci continues the production-for-use theme in the history of her own project "Democracy in Communication," contemporary film and video works which Ranucci collected, edited, subtitled, and distributes in the US. Pat Aufderheide echoes Ranucci's claim that the hurdle of distribution exceeds that of production. (Burton provides a helpful guide to distributors for sales or rentals of films and videos discussed in the volume.)

"Texts in Close-up" offers close readings of celebrated Latin American documentaries. In a fine essay on the Argentine classic, *La hora de los hornos* (*The Hour of the Furnaces*), Robert Stam argues that *La hora* marks a high point in the convergence of two avant-gardes—the formal and the theoretico-political. Jorge Fraga, head of production at the Cuban Film Institute, offers an insider's analysis of editorial strategies in the production of the Institute's weekly newsreel. Also noteworthy is an intricate analysis of a short Nicaraguan film *Bananeras* (*Banana Plantations*). In a theoretically dense essay, John Ramirez examines the possibility of a dialogic mode of address that avoids recasting the Other in a representation system that replicates conquest ideologies. Writing in her characteristically accessible style, Julia Lesage reminds us that "The very notion of studying 'Third World' films elsewhere has to be approached with the same suspicion with which we view the tools and research of anthropologists" (345). Lesage's chapter concentrates on three pieces by women working in three different modes or contexts of production. Lesage, herself a videomaker, explores the relationships among formal choices, political goals, and social situations in media production. She calls for a wider distribution of works that, despite their cultural specificity, "speak to women viewers across national boundaries" (344).

The last section, "Beyond the Documentary/Fiction Dichotomy," challenges conventional distinctions. The dominant theme of the social uses of documentary continues in this section when John Hess returns to a piece he had written more than a decade before. Hess describes the experience of still agreeing with much he had written about *Giron* (*Bay of Pigs*) before he had much familiarity with Cuban films or Cuba, but in his revision he "greatly toned down [his] critique of the film's John Wayneism." Hess explains, "In the last ten years I have come to appreciate the empowering effect of military imagery for Third World people" (359). This last section offers a sense of the contribution Latin American films can make to an understanding of how cultural memory is created through the complex relationship between fictive and documentary modes of representation, as demonstrated in the hybrid forms analyzed by Burton, Ana Lopez, and Ismail Xavier, a Brazilian critic whose thoughtful essay on *Iracema* is worth special mention.

The essays in *The Social Documentary in Latin America* make an important contribution not just to our knowledge of Latin American cinema's documentary history and practices, but also to a larger sense of the place of cinema and video in a changing world. CAROLYN ANDERSON

American Political Movies

An Annotated Filmography of Feature Films

By James E. Combs. New York: Garland, 1990. $30.00

Almost all American films project aspects of our national dreams, desires, and values. That holds true for explicitly political films like Robert Altman's *Nashville* as well as for apolitical entertainments like Donen and Kelly's 1940s musical *On the Town*. For even when Hollywood films totally stylize or even trivialize the social world, they are capable of creating images, characters, and dialogue that illuminate elements of our collective life and culture.

However, the attempt by film critics and academics to define the specific relationship between Hollywood film and an era's political and cultural values is a problematic and tentative one. James E. Combs's brief study entitled *American Political Movies* is one of a number of recent works (among them Terry Christensen's *Reel Politics* and Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner's more ambitious, dense, and theoretical *Camera Politica*) to wrestle with this subject. Combs's book selectively deals with American-made political films beginning with pre-WWI films like *Birth of a Nation*, analyzing anti-communist films of the 1950s like *My Son John*, and concluding in the 1980s with a discussion of films like *Full Metal Jacket* and *Do the Right Thing*. In addition, he provides a useful, lengthy filmography of American political films.

Combs lays out the book's premises in a modest, jargon-free introductory chapter. He believes that most American films are made without a conscious political purpose, and their politics are usually vague, even when political themes are at their center. But he sees them as providing "popular evidence of how we conceive power at a particular time," and are a form of "metaphorical communication" that helps an audience comprehend the nature of their lives. He makes clear that a film is never a "reflection" of a time, but an "ambiguous map" to the politics and culture of an era, and that the relationship is a difficult one to define. He also rejects the reductive, mechanistic notion that films "perpetuate an elite-imposed ideology," and sees a "complex interplay" between the audience's values and the vision of the films.

Combs could have pursued a number of these points in greater depth, particularly the fact that the popular audience itself is no monolith. It is divided by age, class, region, ethnicity, race, and gender, and is often unpredictable, even mercurial, in its shifting reactions to films. Within the same year or two audiences can embrace films with totally different political perspectives and views of Vietnam like *Rambo II* (1985) and *Platoon* (1986). However, I am quibbling, for the strength of the book lies in Combs's ability to lucidly sketch the general parameters of the relationship between politics and film, and to provide incisive capsule analyses of the political climate of each decade. For example, Combs is able to neatly and cogently sum up the decade of the fifties by suggesting that it began with the "breakdown of the political agenda and projects of one age and created the post-war world including the norms of domestic life, the expansion of the consumer economy, and the illusion of consensus at home."

The book, however, is much less assured in its critique of particular films. Combs has almost no interest in the formal structure or directorial style and sensibility of the films he discusses. His emphasis is on the films' social and cultural significance—treating them as historical artifacts rather than as textured, often contradictory works of art. Using that method he comes up with politically pointed discussions of the reasons why 1930s audiences responded more favorably to the benevolent capitalism and individualism of Capra's *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* than to the folksy communalism of Vidor's *Our Daily Bread*, which they found somewhat alien. He also can perceptively analyze how Wilder's *The Apartment* evoked the dark side—an anxiety-ridden, callously self-interested world—of the 1950s vision of a prosperous, contented society.

In fact, Combs's criticism is almost never banal or obtuse, but at times it can be both schematic and lacking in intellectual nuance. His analysis of *The Searchers* turns Ford's dark, western epic, which centers around his most ambiguous hero, Ethan Edwards (John Wayne)—a solitary, vindictive individual—into a film about America's penchant for self-destructive racism. It's not that the film doesn't deal with the nature of Ethan's all-consuming racial hatred, but Ford is no traditional liberal calling for greater racial understanding nor is he interested in evoking the gap between the official commitment to "liberty" and our discriminatory practices. His Indian characters are for the most part treated either as comic foils or baleful savages, and the tragedy of the film lies in Ethan's aloneness—his inability to re-enter Ford's ideal world of family and community.

Combs's analysis of *The Searchers* is just one example of his tendency to reduce the complexity of a film so it can fit the political point or category he wants to develop. The problem is that the social and political perspectives that the films convey are open to contradictory and contesting interpretations, and a film's meaning is found as much in the film's *mise-en-scène* and editing as in its narrative. For example, an ambiguous, open-ended film like Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* can be viewed as pri-

marily a formal, poetic, and profoundly personal work about Travis Bickle—a violently paranoid, alienated cab driver. The film is much more interested in reworking the conventions of *film noir* and exploring Bickle's emotional state and an exquisitely nightmarish and apolitical vision of New York than in providing a critique of 1970s urban culture. On the other hand, Combs characteristically sees it as an explicitly political film—a "portrait of a society characterized by extreme political polarization not over ideology or even class, but rather by an unbridgeable gap between those few who run society and the rest who are victimized by it." It's not an unperceptive reading, but it's one that doesn't look closely enough at the film text—at Scorsese's use of stylized lighting, tight close-ups, and slow-motion shooting to construct his vision of both Bickle and New York.

Clearly *American Political Movies* is not meant to be the final word (and Combs has the grace to state that his work is merely "exploratory") on a subject that defies certitude, and by its nature is suffused in ambiguity. The book, however, can well serve as an introduction to politics and film for undergraduate American Civilization courses. And though its reading of individual films may not be inspired, the critique it provides is a balanced, intelligent, and politically knowing one.

LEONARD QUART

Order in the Universe
The Films of John Carpenter

By Robert C. Cumbow. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1990. $29.50

There was a time when Walter Hill appeared to be the next Sam Peckinpah, a classically influenced director giving traditional genres a modernist twist. On the basis of films like *The Driver*, *The Warriors*, *The Long Riders*, and *Southern Comfort*, academic critics could seemingly rejoice in the continuation of a certain tradition of mainstream film-making. Yet following his greatest commercial success, *48 Hours*, Hill's career has proven both commercially and academically vapid. At the same time Hill seemed so promising, a director of potentially even greater interest appeared. In John Carpenter many felt the veritable reincarnation of Howard Hawks (although Hawks was still alive when Carpenter began making his films), a connection first apparent in *Assault on Precinct 13* in 1976. With the release of Carpenter's remake of Hawks's *The Thing* in 1982, the Hawks connection was firmly established. So too, by this time, was Carpenter's commercial viability; he had directed *Halloween* in 1978, which shortly became the most successful independent production of the modern era. It was also apparent to virtually everyone that *Halloween* had reinvigorated the horror film as no work since *Psycho*, and with its deft handling of point of view, Carpenter seemed the next Hitchcock as well as the next Hawks. Yet if Carpenter's potential was even greater than Hill's, and his rise even more spectacular, his fall has been, if possible, even more precipitous.

In Robert Cumbow's book there is no notion that Carpenter's career has been a disappointment to serious film viewers, or even a recognition that Carpenter's commercial appeal has plummeted disastrously—indicative of its steadfastly fanzine approach. The closest the author comes to justifying this book-length study of Carpenter despite the director's stunted artistic growth and stalled commercial success is the following: "But he still enjoys a growing and rabid cult following that has spawned two regular fan-magazines, one published in England, the other in Japan . . . He is highly respected among a coterie of critics and film enthusiasts who appreciate his genre-consciousness and his reverent, classical approach to film-making." (5) There is no documentation to support the notion of "a growing and rabid cult following," unless it is the presence of these two fan magazines—and in Japan, at least, almost *everyone* is the subject of a fan-magazine. I will accept Cumbow's latter assertion only if he changes "is highly respected . . . " to *was*.

As a fan of Carpenter, Cumbow is intelligent, discussing primarily the characters and themes the director utilizes from the point of view of their consistency across Carpenter's canon and the moral vision that they provide. Cumbow is also perceptive about making comparisons between Carpenter's films and the works upon which he drew to make them. The Hawks connection is particularly well handled, as Cumbow highlights how the Hawksian individual, the Hawksian group, and the Hawksian

marily a formal, poetic, and profoundly personal work about Travis Bickle—a violently paranoid, alienated cab driver. The film is much more interested in reworking the conventions of *film noir* and exploring Bickle's emotional state and an exquisitely nightmarish and apolitical vision of New York than in providing a critique of 1970s urban culture. On the other hand, Combs characteristically sees it as an explicitly political film—a "portrait of a society characterized by extreme political polarization not over ideology or even class, but rather by an unbridgeable gap between those few who run society and the rest who are victimized by it." It's not an unperceptive reading, but it's one that doesn't look closely enough at the film text—at Scorsese's use of stylized lighting, tight close-ups, and slow-motion shooting to construct his vision of both Bickle and New York.

Clearly *American Political Movies* is not meant to be the final word (and Combs has the grace to state that his work is merely "exploratory") on a subject that defies certitude, and by its nature is suffused in ambiguity. The book, however, can well serve as an introduction to politics and film for undergraduate American Civilization courses. And though its reading of individual films may not be inspired, the critique it provides is a balanced, intelligent, and politically knowing one.

LEONARD QUART

Order in the Universe
The Films of John Carpenter

By Robert C. Cumbow. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1990. $29.50

There was a time when Walter Hill appeared to be the next Sam Peckinpah, a classically influenced director giving traditional genres a modernist twist. On the basis of films like *The Driver*, *The Warriors*, *The Long Riders*, and *Southern Comfort*, academic critics could seemingly rejoice in the continuation of a certain tradition of mainstream film-making. Yet following his greatest commercial success, *48 Hours*, Hill's career has proven both commercially and academically vapid. At the same time Hill seemed so promising, a director of potentially even greater interest appeared. In John Carpenter many felt the veritable reincarnation of Howard Hawks (although Hawks was still alive when Carpenter began making his films), a connection first apparent in *Assault on Precinct 13* in 1976. With the release of Carpenter's remake of Hawks's *The Thing* in 1982, the Hawks connection was firmly established. So too, by this time, was Carpenter's commercial viability; he had directed *Halloween* in 1978, which shortly became the most successful independent production of the modern era. It was also apparent to virtually everyone that *Halloween* had reinvigorated the horror film as no work since *Psycho*, and with its deft handling of point of view, Carpenter seemed the next Hitchcock as well as the next Hawks. Yet if Carpenter's potential was even greater than Hill's, and his rise even more spectacular, his fall has been, if possible, even more precipitous.

In Robert Cumbow's book there is no notion that Carpenter's career has been a disappointment to serious film viewers, or even a recognition that Carpenter's commercial appeal has plummeted disastrously—indicative of its steadfastly fanzine approach. The closest the author comes to justifying this book-length study of Carpenter despite the director's stunted artistic growth and stalled commercial success is the following: "But he still enjoys a growing and rabid cult following that has spawned two regular fan-magazines, one published in England, the other in Japan . . . He is highly respected among a coterie of critics and film enthusiasts who appreciate his genre-consciousness and his reverent, classical approach to film-making." (5) There is no documentation to support the notion of "a growing and rabid cult following," unless it is the presence of these two fan magazines—and in Japan, at least, almost *everyone* is the subject of a fan-magazine. I will accept Cumbow's latter assertion only if he changes "is highly respected . . . " to *was*.

As a fan of Carpenter, Cumbow is intelligent, discussing primarily the characters and themes the director utilizes from the point of view of their consistency across Carpenter's canon and the moral vision that they provide. Cumbow is also perceptive about making comparisons between Carpenter's films and the works upon which he drew to make them. The Hawks connection is particularly well handled, as Cumbow highlights how the Hawksian individual, the Hawksian group, and the Hawksian

woman recur quite clearly throughout Carpenter's cinema, even, or especially, within the horror and science fiction genres. Yet we still must accept Carpenter's continued importance *a priori*, for little here will disabuse one of the conviction that Carpenter's vision could not sustain itself as his career progressed. Carpenter's first film, *Dark Star*, for instance, has become something of a cult favorite now, yet it is interesting that neither he nor co-writer Dan O'Bannon could substantially progress beyond their low-budget roots. Similarly, the overt foregrounding of storytelling within the narrative of *The Fog*, which seemed to tap some of the roots of horror's enduring appeal, has similarly been a one-time only insight on Carpenter's part. The discussion of *Escape from New York* has Cumbow wondering if the film was a miscalculation in its attempt at conjoining a science-fiction adventure to an action comedy. He indicates that only later, with *Big Trouble in Little China*, would Carpenter produce a film of successful wit and humor. Yet by the time we get to the discussion of the later film, we find less than five pages devoted to it, hardly what one would expect for a film the author claims is "the purest and most mature Carpenter film to date." (147) And while we are on the subject of influences, at least a mention in passing about the stylistic, thematic, and technical influences of the Shaw Brothers would seem obligatory when discussing a film explicitly set within the world of Chinese martial arts and magic.

The Scarecrow Press film-makers series does have its importance to the world of film scholarship by devoting full-length studies to directors not elsewhere covered; its studies, for instance, of James Whale, William A. Wellman, Stanley Donen, Franklin J. Schaffner, and Robert Florey remain the only book-length texts we have on these film-makers. And such single studies may be sufficient. To this list we now add John Carpenter —yet who would have thought, say eight years ago, that Carpenter would join the likes of Wellman, Florey, Donen, and Schaffner? Why directors like Hill and Carpenter begin so promisingly but can sustain neither academic nor commercial appeal remains an open topic for discussion, one nowhere found in Cumbow's book. One can admire Cumbow's loyalty to his subject, if not his scholarly sensibility.

DAVID DESSER

Games of Terror
Halloween, Friday the 13th, and the Films of the Stalker Cycle

By Vera Dika. Cranbury, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1990. $28.50

Vera Dika deserves full credit for venturing into a subgenre most critics regard as repugnant. Her book concentrates on that cycle of horror films released during 1976–81 commonly known as the "slasher film." Dika argues that a better title for films such as *Halloween* (1978), *Friday the 13th* (1980), *Friday the 13th Part 2* (1981), *Prom Night*, *Terror Train* (both 1980), *Graduation Day* (1981), *Happy Birthday to Me*, *Hell Night*, and *The Burning* (all 1981) is rather the "stalker" film. Their common component is the killer's cinematic characterization. Generally offscreen for most of the film, the killer's presence is usually recognizable by a distinctive shot or series of shots. Other common traits involve particular combinations of settings, characters, and plot conventions. Avoiding the problematic terrain of artistic evaluation, Dika's work confines itself to this limited group. It provides a useful introduction to further serious study of this particular form.

Dika's analysis is formalist in character. Indebted to Lévi-Strauss's isolation of binary oppositions and Will Wright's structuralist study *Six Guns and Society* (1975), the author usefully applies critical techniques reminiscent of early cine-structuralism to the films in question. Arguably, this is one way of approaching an artistically barren genre which does need some serious analysis. Centering on each film's typological structure, Dika engages in a meticulous examination of their characteristic formal devices. Unlike Will Wright, she does consider relevant aspects of psychoanalytic and industrial questions. Regarding *Halloween* as initiating the stalker cycle and noting the first two *Friday the 13th* films as being the most successful recombinations, Dika sees the genre as satisfying its audience on a number of levels. Functioning as cinematic games, psychosexual titillation, and modern day myths, the films serve as communication systems explaining contemporary cultural conflicts to a predominantly adolescent audience. These conflicts involve the changeover from sixties

woman recur quite clearly throughout Carpenter's cinema, even, or especially, within the horror and science fiction genres. Yet we still must accept Carpenter's continued importance *a priori*, for little here will disabuse one of the conviction that Carpenter's vision could not sustain itself as his career progressed. Carpenter's first film, *Dark Star*, for instance, has become something of a cult favorite now, yet it is interesting that neither he nor co-writer Dan O'Bannon could substantially progress beyond their low-budget roots. Similarly, the overt foregrounding of storytelling within the narrative of *The Fog*, which seemed to tap some of the roots of horror's enduring appeal, has similarly been a one-time only insight on Carpenter's part. The discussion of *Escape from New York* has Cumbow wondering if the film was a miscalculation in its attempt at conjoining a science-fiction adventure to an action comedy. He indicates that only later, with *Big Trouble in Little China*, would Carpenter produce a film of successful wit and humor. Yet by the time we get to the discussion of the later film, we find less than five pages devoted to it, hardly what one would expect for a film the author claims is "the purest and most mature Carpenter film to date." (147) And while we are on the subject of influences, at least a mention in passing about the stylistic, thematic, and technical influences of the Shaw Brothers would seem obligatory when discussing a film explicitly set within the world of Chinese martial arts and magic.

The Scarecrow Press film-makers series does have its importance to the world of film scholarship by devoting full-length studies to directors not elsewhere covered; its studies, for instance, of James Whale, William A. Wellman, Stanley Donen, Franklin J. Schaffner, and Robert Florey remain the only book-length texts we have on these film-makers. And such single studies may be sufficient. To this list we now add John Carpenter —yet who would have thought, say eight years ago, that Carpenter would join the likes of Wellman, Florey, Donen, and Schaffner? Why directors like Hill and Carpenter begin so promisingly but can sustain neither academic nor commercial appeal remains an open topic for discussion, one nowhere found in Cumbow's book. One can admire Cumbow's loyalty to his subject, if not his scholarly sensibility.

DAVID DESSER

Games of Terror
Halloween, Friday the 13th, and the Films of the Stalker Cycle

By Vera Dika. Cranbury, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1990. $28.50

Vera Dika deserves full credit for venturing into a subgenre most critics regard as repugnant. Her book concentrates on that cycle of horror films released during 1976–81 commonly known as the "slasher film." Dika argues that a better title for films such as *Halloween* (1978), *Friday the 13th* (1980), *Friday the 13th Part 2* (1981), *Prom Night*, *Terror Train* (both 1980), *Graduation Day* (1981), *Happy Birthday to Me*, *Hell Night*, and *The Burning* (all 1981) is rather the "stalker" film. Their common component is the killer's cinematic characterization. Generally offscreen for most of the film, the killer's presence is usually recognizable by a distinctive shot or series of shots. Other common traits involve particular combinations of settings, characters, and plot conventions. Avoiding the problematic terrain of artistic evaluation, Dika's work confines itself to this limited group. It provides a useful introduction to further serious study of this particular form.

Dika's analysis is formalist in character. Indebted to Lévi-Strauss's isolation of binary oppositions and Will Wright's structuralist study *Six Guns and Society* (1975), the author usefully applies critical techniques reminiscent of early cine-structuralism to the films in question. Arguably, this is one way of approaching an artistically barren genre which does need some serious analysis. Centering on each film's typological structure, Dika engages in a meticulous examination of their characteristic formal devices. Unlike Will Wright, she does consider relevant aspects of psychoanalytic and industrial questions. Regarding *Halloween* as initiating the stalker cycle and noting the first two *Friday the 13th* films as being the most successful recombinations, Dika sees the genre as satisfying its audience on a number of levels. Functioning as cinematic games, psychosexual titillation, and modern day myths, the films serve as communication systems explaining contemporary cultural conflicts to a predominantly adolescent audience. These conflicts involve the changeover from sixties

rebellion towards Reaganite conservatism. The films "explain how old ideas, especially those of pacifism and extended personal liberties, are outmoded, and that survival rests on the realization of the exigencies of life in eighties America . . . self-awareness, a more conservative stance in personal and sexual matters, and (as did the Western) the readiness to use violence are once again the attitudes that will best ensure survival" (138).

The thesis involving psychological and sociological arguments is definitely interesting. Unfortunately, it is not sufficiently developed. There is little evidence of any consideration of new material from the time of Dika's original 1985 dissertation to its current book form. One would have expected reference to Andrew Britton's work on Reaganite entertainment as well as other surveys of eighties cultural complexities such as Ryan and Kellner's *Camera Politica*. *Games of Terror* thus has many problems. As an initial first-stage investigation it is interesting enough. But the exploration needs to go much further, certainly far beyond the book's primary dissertation format to take account of new material. It is also problematic in its use of critical methodologies. In limiting herself to concisely describing the formal characteristics of the stalker cycle Dika's work is useful enough. But she shows no awareness of contemporary criticisms made by scholars concerning the works of Cawelti, Wright, and Propp. As a result the work is unfortunately reductive, perhaps because structuralist methodology has problems both in formal and contextual analysis, as Janey Place demonstrated in her *Jump Cut*, 18 (1979) review of Will Wright: "To claim to find *the* meaning through the analysis of repeated motifs through a wide range of cultural products is to reduce the depth and richness of the relationship between the works of popular culture and our society. A structuralist analysis that explores how meaning is possible will make the range of interpretations accessible, not close off all but the most superficial, narrative meaning" (28).

Dika cites Place in her bibliography. But like Carol Clover's 1987 *Representations* article, "Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film," there is no real engagement with the challenge of alternative formulations. *Games of Terror* thus appears as reductive as the group of films analyzed. There is a crucial need for better engagement with a number of competing methodologies, particularly those concerning feminism, gender, and postmodernism than is otherwise the case. While Dika does take note of the last, claiming that the stalker films' reassembled fragmentary opacity and method of appropriation mark them as "postmodern works" (21), the only work she cites is Jameson's *Postmodernism and Consumer Society*. Other significant works on postmodernism remain unconsulted. Another neglected area is the relationship of postmodernism and the apocalyptic, particularly in contrasting the stalker cycle with their seventies predecessors.

Dika notes the psychoanalytic orientation of the stalker cycle, bringing in relevant Freudian concepts of voyeurism, fetishism, and the gaze. There are parallels with the primal scene. "The viewer is inscribed into the film as the fictionalized voyeur, gazing at an action that is structurally similar to the viewing of the primal scene. He watches an illicit event, unacknowledged by the perpetrators of the drama, and sees the humiliation and punishment of a female. In that her wound is manifestly seen, it is symbolic of the female genitalia, the site of the fantasied act of castration" (91). It is interesting that Dika here treats the viewer's gender as male. Elsewhere (142) she argues that there is no evidence for a predominantly male audience for this cycle. Many questions thus arise in terms of a feminist analysis that the book avoids. Dika comments on the "rarity" of the slasher film's heroine as "a symbol for an enfeebled United States, but one that, when roused, is still strong" (138). However, Dika's use of Metz and Mulvey has overtones of that gendered psychoanalytic "bachelor machine" criticized by feminist theorists. The validation of the heroine is certainly post-feminist in the most aggressively masculine sense. There is thus a crucial need for a deeper feminist analysis than is otherwise the case in *Games of Terror*.

While aesthetic questions of artistic value and quality are inappropriate criteria to apply to a cycle of this nature, there is certainly a crucial need to go beyond the reductive tenets of early structuralism and ask further questions the book never does. Dika criticizes Wood's interpretations of seventies and eighties horror films due to their unwieldy nature. She sees the stalker films' young community as "an active on-screen presence involved in a variety of social practices" (57). Thus, in contrast to the inadequate or deformed character of the stalker (when eventually seen), the appropriate binary op-

position is one of life/death. But we may ask why so many of this healthy young community often appear grotesque and die gruesome deaths? Dika does recognize the role of the sexually active "new women" of *Halloween* who are Michael's first victims (45–46). But she never goes on to examine this facet in terms of the necessary political and cultural connotations required. And aesthetic evaluation remains as a structured absence determining both one's reaction to the films and to critical work demanding to be taken seriously. Can we really believe that "the writers of *Friday the 13th* have obviously tried to be fair and 'nonsexist' by representing the victims equally between the sexes, [while] the most brutal murders and the greatest amount of ridicule are reserved for the female victims" (72)? The visual evidence (and accompanying nausea) speaks for itself.

Games of Terror is certainly worth investigating for those interested in this sub-genre. But the subject needs better use of contemporary critical methodologies and more attention to issues of contemporary cultural analysis than is sadly the case here.

TONY WILLIAMS

Re-interpreting Brecht

His Influence on Contemporary Drama and Film

Edited by Pia Kleber and Colin Visser. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

This volume promises to serve a much-needed function: to survey the effects of Bertolt Brecht's theories and theatrical practice on the dramatic and cinematic arts since the German dramatist's death in 1956. It assembles conference papers given in Toronto in October 1986, and thus has some of the looseness of structure that so often characterizes such collections. Although only two of the 14 essays deal primarily with film, all are readable and relevant, and some are very good indeed.

Readers interested in applications of Brechtian theory to the cinema will no doubt turn first to Thomas Elsaesser's "From Anti-illusionism to Hyper-realism: Bertolt Brecht and Contemporary Film." Yet Elsaesser's contribution is a somewhat disappointing piece of work from a critic who can so often be dazzling, for he gives us merely a backward glance at post-1960s materialist film theory. The essay is concise and coherent, but hardly filled with new insights. It is not so much that the points of reference Elsaesser hits are predictable—Godard, Straub, the New German Cinema, *Screen*, Lacanian psychoanalysis—but that he leaves out other important manifestations of Brecht's influence on film.

The reader gets no sense, for example, that Brechtian film-making went on in France in the 1970s far beyond the work of Godard. Film-makers such as René Allio, André Téchiné, Phillipe Nahoun, Ariane Mnouchkine, Joël Farges, Patrick Poidevin, and Jean-Louis Comolli all made works in the wake of May '68 that attempted materialist analyses of historical events, sometimes in very programmatic ways. That such film-makers never got the widespread attention of a Godard or a Straub is no reason to ignore them, and one wishes that the volume might have had in it an essay that would have done for French film what Bernard Dort, in his excellent survey "Crossing the Desert: Brecht in France in the 1980s," does to examine what has happened to Brecht in the French theater.

Even worse, a reader could easily surmise from Elsaesser's essay that Brecht's influence on cinema has never gone beyond Europe or the United States. There is no suggestion whatsoever of influence on Far Eastern or Third World cinema—no mention of Nagisa Oshima, of Glauber Rocha, of the more structurally adventurous Cuban cinema of the 1970s, nor of the Indian parallel cinema movement. It is an unfortunate oversight to exclude at least three continents from an essay so sweepingly subtitled "Bertolt Brecht and Contemporary Film." Women, at least, fare significantly better in this volume. A pair of essays, one on North American feminist theater, the other a look by Renate Möhrmann at West German women's cinema, make for an enlightening juxtaposition that highlights the commonality between the two movements.

Re-interpreting Brecht's most satisfying essay for the film scholar is, rather, one that makes only occasional mention of film, but whose implications for film study are significant. In "Blocking Brecht" (a title whose pun is intentional), Maarten Van Dijk discusses Brecht's principles for creating stage pictures, and in particular his designation that changes

position is one of life/death. But we may ask why so many of this healthy young community often appear grotesque and die gruesome deaths? Dika does recognize the role of the sexually active "new women" of *Halloween* who are Michael's first victims (45–46). But she never goes on to examine this facet in terms of the necessary political and cultural connotations required. And aesthetic evaluation remains as a structured absence determining both one's reaction to the films and to critical work demanding to be taken seriously. Can we really believe that "the writers of *Friday the 13th* have obviously tried to be fair and 'nonsexist' by representing the victims equally between the sexes, [while] the most brutal murders and the greatest amount of ridicule are reserved for the female victims" (72)? The visual evidence (and accompanying nausea) speaks for itself.

Games of Terror is certainly worth investigating for those interested in this sub-genre. But the subject needs better use of contemporary critical methodologies and more attention to issues of contemporary cultural analysis than is sadly the case here.

TONY WILLIAMS

Re-interpreting Brecht

His Influence on Contemporary Drama and Film

Edited by Pia Kleber and Colin Visser. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

This volume promises to serve a much-needed function: to survey the effects of Bertolt Brecht's theories and theatrical practice on the dramatic and cinematic arts since the German dramatist's death in 1956. It assembles conference papers given in Toronto in October 1986, and thus has some of the looseness of structure that so often characterizes such collections. Although only two of the 14 essays deal primarily with film, all are readable and relevant, and some are very good indeed.

Readers interested in applications of Brechtian theory to the cinema will no doubt turn first to Thomas Elsaesser's "From Anti-illusionism to Hyper-realism: Bertolt Brecht and Contemporary Film." Yet Elsaesser's contribution is a somewhat disappointing piece of work from a critic who can so often be dazzling, for he gives us merely a backward glance at post-1960s materialist film theory. The essay is concise and coherent, but hardly filled with new insights. It is not so much that the points of reference Elsaesser hits are predictable—Godard, Straub, the New German Cinema, *Screen*, Lacanian psychoanalysis—but that he leaves out other important manifestations of Brecht's influence on film.

The reader gets no sense, for example, that Brechtian film-making went on in France in the 1970s far beyond the work of Godard. Film-makers such as René Allio, André Téchiné, Phillipe Nahoun, Ariane Mnouchkine, Joël Farges, Patrick Poidevin, and Jean-Louis Comolli all made works in the wake of May '68 that attempted materialist analyses of historical events, sometimes in very programmatic ways. That such film-makers never got the widespread attention of a Godard or a Straub is no reason to ignore them, and one wishes that the volume might have had in it an essay that would have done for French film what Bernard Dort, in his excellent survey "Crossing the Desert: Brecht in France in the 1980s," does to examine what has happened to Brecht in the French theater.

Even worse, a reader could easily surmise from Elsaesser's essay that Brecht's influence on cinema has never gone beyond Europe or the United States. There is no suggestion whatsoever of influence on Far Eastern or Third World cinema—no mention of Nagisa Oshima, of Glauber Rocha, of the more structurally adventurous Cuban cinema of the 1970s, nor of the Indian parallel cinema movement. It is an unfortunate oversight to exclude at least three continents from an essay so sweepingly subtitled "Bertolt Brecht and Contemporary Film." Women, at least, fare significantly better in this volume. A pair of essays, one on North American feminist theater, the other a look by Renate Möhrmann at West German women's cinema, make for an enlightening juxtaposition that highlights the commonality between the two movements.

Re-interpreting Brecht's most satisfying essay for the film scholar is, rather, one that makes only occasional mention of film, but whose implications for film study are significant. In "Blocking Brecht" (a title whose pun is intentional), Maarten Van Dijk discusses Brecht's principles for creating stage pictures, and in particular his designation that changes

in blocking should always be motivated by the political implications of the text. The author uses examples from recent, unsuccessful British productions of *Mother Courage*, *Days of the Commune*, and *Galileo* to show how departures from Brecht's theoretical principles of blocking led to their artistic failures. Although the author breaks no new theoretical ground, the concreteness and relevance of his examples beautifully complement his theoretical discussion.

Two concepts of Brecht's that Van Dijk advances are that of simplicity (whereby stage positions are held "as long as there is no compelling reason for changing them") and a second of montage (both between scenes and within them). Both apply easily to the cinema. In the film medium, where there is so often a striving for variation of images for its own sake, Brecht and Van Dijk's call for simplicity becomes a striking antidote to the syndrome promoted by advertising and MTV whereby pace, rhythm, and atmosphere become ends in themselves, disconnected from ideas. Van Dijk's descriptions of Brechtian montage as a stage technique, with its accompanying citations of Eisenstein, Renoir, and Chaplin, round out an essay that elegantly bridges the media of film and theater and promotes understanding of both. Although intended as a critique of current practices of staging Brecht in Britain, one could easily draw from it a coherent model, devoid of elitism and intellectual snobbery, of how a truly Brechtian cinema could tell stories to a mass audience.

What emerges from the volume, for better or for worse, is the sense that the theaters of Bertolt Brecht and his followers, and the filmic variations that have come after them, now represent a very particular established tradition rather than a new challenge to conventional theater and film. If there is a common ground to the essays of this book, it is that they look on Brecht's principles as not a static set of rules, but rather as guiding principles that, through the process of independent thinking and occasional rebellion, must constantly be reformulated and reapplied to new historical circumstances. Given the fall of East European communism and the reappraisal of the socialist ideal that has come with the 1990s, such an approach is perhaps the only sensible one.

In this context, one most productively positions Brecht as neither the first nor last playwright and director to create epic or dialectical theater; rather, he emphasizes aspects of theater that can be seen as a part of a larger, continuing tradition that Brecht himself traced back to Shakespeare. Where film fits into this is still problematic, and perhaps always will be. Just as one group of film and literature scholars continue to debate (endlessly) whether a successful Shakespearean cinema has ever been achieved, or is even possible, the chapters in this book that deal with the movies implicitly carry on the inevitable, and perhaps even knottier, process of speculation about whether a successful Brechtian cinema has similarly ever been achieved, or is even possible. GEORGE LELLIS

Close Viewings

An Anthology of New Film Criticism

Edited by Peter Lehman. Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1990. $49.95 cloth, $19.95 paper

Peter Lehman's *Close Viewings* is a handsomely produced collection of 20 first-rate essays by distinguished contemporary film scholars. A quick glance at the contributors list (arranged alphabetically from Charles Affron to Charles Wolfe) and the following table of contents—supplemented perhaps by a leisurely perusal of the illustrations (especially the elegant color frame-enlargements accompanying Mary Beth Haralovich's essay on Sirk's *All That Heaven Allows*)—is probably all the encouragement most readers of *Film Quarterly* will need to acquire the book. These preliminaries, moreover, amount to a kind of pre-reading. Especially as repeated on the book jacket, they establish a contextt (those *other* film anthologies which adopt "a solely abstract, theoretical focus") within which *Close Viewings* literally asks to be evaluated as a collection of readings which are "theoretically and methodologically rigorous" yet rich in film-critical "detail." There is hardly an essay in the whole collection which does not sustain the claim. Indeed, the essays as Lehman has arranged them often engage each other dialogically in ways that are deeply satisfying. Yet I find the

in blocking should always be motivated by the political implications of the text. The author uses examples from recent, unsuccessful British productions of *Mother Courage*, *Days of the Commune*, and *Galileo* to show how departures from Brecht's theoretical principles of blocking led to their artistic failures. Although the author breaks no new theoretical ground, the concreteness and relevance of his examples beautifully complement his theoretical discussion.

Two concepts of Brecht's that Van Dijk advances are that of simplicity (whereby stage positions are held "as long as there is no compelling reason for changing them") and a second of montage (both between scenes and within them). Both apply easily to the cinema. In the film medium, where there is so often a striving for variation of images for its own sake, Brecht and Van Dijk's call for simplicity becomes a striking antidote to the syndrome promoted by advertising and MTV whereby pace, rhythm, and atmosphere become ends in themselves, disconnected from ideas. Van Dijk's descriptions of Brechtian montage as a stage technique, with its accompanying citations of Eisenstein, Renoir, and Chaplin, round out an essay that elegantly bridges the media of film and theater and promotes understanding of both. Although intended as a critique of current practices of staging Brecht in Britain, one could easily draw from it a coherent model, devoid of elitism and intellectual snobbery, of how a truly Brechtian cinema could tell stories to a mass audience.

What emerges from the volume, for better or for worse, is the sense that the theaters of Bertolt Brecht and his followers, and the filmic variations that have come after them, now represent a very particular established tradition rather than a new challenge to conventional theater and film. If there is a common ground to the essays of this book, it is that they look on Brecht's principles as not a static set of rules, but rather as guiding principles that, through the process of independent thinking and occasional rebellion, must constantly be reformulated and reapplied to new historical circumstances. Given the fall of East European communism and the reappraisal of the socialist ideal that has come with the 1990s, such an approach is perhaps the only sensible one.

In this context, one most productively positions Brecht as neither the first nor last playwright and director to create epic or dialectical theater; rather, he emphasizes aspects of theater that can be seen as a part of a larger, continuing tradition that Brecht himself traced back to Shakespeare. Where film fits into this is still problematic, and perhaps always will be. Just as one group of film and literature scholars continue to debate (endlessly) whether a successful Shakespearean cinema has ever been achieved, or is even possible, the chapters in this book that deal with the movies implicitly carry on the inevitable, and perhaps even knottier, process of speculation about whether a successful Brechtian cinema has similarly ever been achieved, or is even possible. GEORGE LELLIS

Close Viewings

An Anthology of New Film Criticism

Edited by Peter Lehman. Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1990. $49.95 cloth, $19.95 paper

Peter Lehman's *Close Viewings* is a handsomely produced collection of 20 first-rate essays by distinguished contemporary film scholars. A quick glance at the contributors list (arranged alphabetically from Charles Affron to Charles Wolfe) and the following table of contents—supplemented perhaps by a leisurely perusal of the illustrations (especially the elegant color frame-enlargements accompanying Mary Beth Haralovich's essay on Sirk's *All That Heaven Allows*)—is probably all the encouragement most readers of *Film Quarterly* will need to acquire the book. These preliminaries, moreover, amount to a kind of pre-reading. Especially as repeated on the book jacket, they establish a contextt (those *other* film anthologies which adopt "a solely abstract, theoretical focus") within which *Close Viewings* literally asks to be evaluated as a collection of readings which are "theoretically and methodologically rigorous" yet rich in film-critical "detail." There is hardly an essay in the whole collection which does not sustain the claim. Indeed, the essays as Lehman has arranged them often engage each other dialogically in ways that are deeply satisfying. Yet I find the

collection as a *whole* to be curiously and symptomatically troubled. Let me elaborate briefly by reference to Lehman's title.

New Film Criticism. "New" hardly describes the films under analysis; only *Desperately Seeking Susan* (the single woman-directed film discussed) was released after 1980. Nor does "new" much apply to the critics discussing them, all of whom are well established film scholars (Lehman is president of The Society for Cinema Studies, for example). Indeed, a number of the essays are reprinted (Branigan, Brunette, Mayne) or reprint segments from earlier work (Budd on *Caligari*, Lehman on *The Searchers*); most of the essays are "new" only in the weak sense of being recently written. The only audience for whom the collection will stand as a source of historical or methodological novelty is the unitiated, presumably undergraduates. And the obvious goal of the collection—as the book jacket indicates—is "to introduce the reader to current film analysis." Put another way, *Close Viewings* exemplifies "business as usual." The splendid quality of the essays indicates *why* the film study business continues to attract practitioners and students.

Indeed, the book which *Close Viewings* is most clearly designed to displace from the shelves at university book stores is less Bill Nichols's *Movies and Methods* than Bordwell and Thompson's *Film Art*, which it mimes in any number of ways. Nearly half of the essays cite some version of "Madison Neoformalism" directly, and many of the others take as their ideological foil and rhetorical starting point a generalized picture of "The Classical Narrative Cinema" largely in accord with that described by Bordwell and Thompson. It's hard to avoid a sense of *déjà vu* when William Luhr, in the book's first chapter, describes "Classical Hollywood narration" by means of (as prologue to) an extended analysis of *The Maltese Falcon*; by the time you've read Branigan on Ozu and Self on Altman and Kirihara on Tati the point is well past making. The volume's theoretical hollowness, moreover, is a perfect illustration of Bordwell's claim, in *Making Meaning*, that film criticism is less a theory-driven than a goal-driven enterprise, the end of which is novel and persuasive interpretations, the craft of which is learned less by deduction from theory than by induction from practice, by reading and assimilating the institutional tasks and rhetorical tactics of critical "exemplars."

What a practicing film critic can pick up from *Close Viewings* will depend upon the film critic. The auteurist in me can't help but notice, for instance, that a "rational agent" model of the director is assumed across the board. Even Patricia Mellencamp—whose essay on "The Sexual Economics of *Gold Diggers of 1933*" is arguably the collection's finest example of "symptomatic" criticism—credits Busby Berkeley (if not Mervyn Le Roy) with a self-conscious understanding of the Freudian implications of the erotic assembly-line spectacles he staged. Moreover—and despite the near total neglect of such canonical classical directors as Hawks, Welles, Lang, Von Sternberg, and Hitchcock—most of the essays still focus on Hollywood. Indeed, only seven of the 20 essays consider non-Hollywood movies, and three of those (Brunette on Rossellini, Branigan on Ozu, and Mayne on Fassbinder) are reprints, as if Lehman had encountered some difficulty in acquiring essays on foreign film-makers. (Are others besides myself finding it ever more difficult to teach subtitled films to ever less adventuresome students?) Two other observations are worth making briefly. Despite the oft-repeated condemnation of Hollywood's stylistic and generic repetitiveness, one genre (comedy: e.g., *MASH*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *Desperately Seeking Susan*) and one studio (Warner Bros.: e.g., *Gold Diggers of 1933*, *The Singing Fool*, *The Searchers*) are repeatedly singled out, and in most cases the notice hinges on some quality of resistance or exception to normative Hollywood-studio practice. Perhaps Hollywood is not such a monolith (or monomyth) after all?

Close Viewings. Given film study's inheritance of literary New Criticism—a connection Bordwell documents at length in *Making Meaning*—some conflict between "New" and "Close" seems unavoidable; "close reading" is exactly that "Old" mode of analysis which, as Lucy Fischer remarks in the opening paragraphs of "The Desire to Desire: *Desperately Seeking Susan*," "connotes placing a hermetic seal around" the text, "studying in great detail the bounded words on a page or images on a screen," and which film study, in its turn to history and to "symptomatic analysis," has prided itself—falsely in Bordwell's estimation—on having gone beyond. So what does the "New" version of "Close" look like? Close to what? Close to whom?

The word "close" appears (by my count, after two readings) in only five passages of the entire volume, once in the Fischer language just cited, twice in the first paragraph of Lehman's brief "Introduction," twice more in Budd's piece on *Caligari*. In Lehman's paragraph there is a rejected (literalist) sense of "close," as implying a "proper critical distance," and a preferred usage which Lehman takes the essays to exemplify: "Regardless of what interests us in a film, we should be careful to support the significance we attribute to it with a grasp of the film and not to generalize too quickly." (3) The second Budd usage is compatible with the latter understanding of "close," as having to do with "the closer inspection" that a retrospective (vs. an "advancing" or "consumerist") reading allows for. But it is the first Budd usage which clearly stands—though very late in the volume—for accepted critical parlance: "Films, like other cultural products, are made and received within particular historical situations. Thus close analyses of film texts will be most revealing when they demonstrate how textual operations and processes are implicated in larger historical processes." (333) Lehman's organization of *Close Viewings*—a section on "formal analysis" followed by one on "cultural analysis"—would seem to side with Budd's more orthodox first usage here, as would the two-part organization of Lehman's concluding essay on *The Searchers*, which discusses visual and aural motifs before turning to questions of ideological representation and repression. Yet Lehman's categories are conceptually baggy, despite the expectation (established by the book's title) that Lehman's "formal vs. cultural" doublet will align fairly directly with Bordwell's contrast between "implicit" and "symptomatic" meaning. Luhr's discussion of the repression of sexual difference in *The Maltese Falcon* in Part I is every bit as symptomatic as Walker and Waldman's analogous discussion of Huston's *Freud* in Part II.

A better way to characterize the relationship of the two parts of *Close Viewings*—hinted at in Lehman's declaration that the "division is pedagogical"—is to say that the Part I essays are both "formal" in a "Neoformalist" sense of the term *and* cultural, while most of the Part II essays are more *exclusively* (and expansively) cultural. Thus Branigan's already (and justly) famous essay on Ozu in Lehman's Part I contrasts Ozu's "spatial system" to that of Classical Hollywood in ways which attend to minute details of camera placement and graphic emphasis while pointedly avoiding the attribution of implicit meaning (e.g., to Ozu's "transition" shots) which it is the task of Hollywood narrative to deliver up on an invisible shot/reverse-shot platter. Rather, objects and people in Ozu evidence a "phenomenological *there*ness" which interpretation effectively devalues as grist for its hermeneutic mill. Branigan gets as close as he can to "the material surface of perception" and dwells there, refusing to be swept away by comprehension strategies derived from the experience of Hollywood movies. The gesture is both a contribution (in Bordwell's terms) to a poetics of cinema, an enumeration of compositional resources at different times and in different places, and a political gesture, as Branigan's vocabulary ("dialectic," "material," "modernist," "tension," "defamiliarized") makes clear despite his explicit disavowal of an evaluative agenda. Essays in Part II spend comparatively less time elaborating the vocabulary of stylistic analysis and considerably more attending to the cultural intertexts and effects of those styles, on the implicit assumption that even student readers by now would be "conversant" with the lingo and ready to put it to use. Indeed, once the language of criticism is mastered it hardly matters that Douglas Gomery's chapter on *The Singing Fool* proceeds without describing so much as a single shot from the film. His in fact very fine historical analysis of how *The Singing Fool* helped confirm the commercial viability of the sound film after the one-shot success of *The Jazz Singer* is evidently "close enough" to something to merit inclusion in *Close Viewings*.

A cynical reading of the Branigan/Gomery "difference" might conclude that cultural analysis without formal analysis is more acceptable film-critical practice than formal analysis without cultural. "Acceptable" is the key word here, as there is no strong *logical* connection between the two. Formal and cultural analysis each can proceed, and often has proceeded, without the other—or else the relationship would never have become an issue in the first place. Perhaps the logical weakness here explains the repeated allusion in *Close Viewings* to some version of the "Classical Narrative Cinema" model; it is a text-schemata which always already establishes (under a loosely Marxist equation of

Hollywood with capitalism) a correlation between textual features and cultural effects. A less cynical construal would describe the relation of formal to cultural analyses as historically motivated, the product less of "theory" than of particular "discursive practices" or "regularities" as David Rodowick (anticipating Bordwell's "routines and practices" notion) has framed the matter. Indeed, in *The Crisis of Political Modernism* Rodowick has observed how film criticism's attentiveness to the "materiality" of cinema, explicitly to circumstances of production and consumption, these taken as *determining* the social effectivity of a given instance of cinema, effectively "naturalizes" the institution of academic criticism itself by denying *its* history and effectivity. (The movie made me do it!) Yet Bordwell and Rodowick are both very explicit in claiming that the meaning critics make is profoundly underdetermined by the film texts under analysis.

The "closeness" which most matters in *Close Viewings*, then, is closeness to a particular set of institutional protocols and routines which render certain "semantic fields" and "text schemata" and rule-of-thumb "heuristics" institutionally salient. As a pedagogical device for inculcating those routines in a new generation of viewers *Close Viewings* is exemplary. What troubles *this* reader is the degree to which Lehman and his colleagues generally avoid elucidation of the institutional circumstances which make books like *Close Viewings* possible in the first place. Lehman's symptomatically sketchy definition of "close"—as urging us to "be careful to support the significance we attribute" to a film—avoids the history which makes "close" a contested concept while expressing (and repressing) real anxiety about the institutional practice of film criticism. The only essay in *Close Viewings* which comes near to offering a critique of the orthodox "Classical Narrative Cinema" model, for example, is Noel Carroll's revisionary analysis (in "Buster Keaton, *The General* and Visible Intelligibility") of Bazin's "image vs. reality" theory. By the analytic standards of Carroll's *Mystifying Movies* it is muted critique indeed. Perhaps "close" is a matter of normative "good manners" after all. An introductory text can hardly cover all bases. *Close Viewings* deserves a long and happy classroom life. But I can't help thinking that a better sketch of the playing field would have made for a better book.

LELAND POAGUE

Woody Allen

By Graham McCann. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1990. $24.95.

Graham McCann's study of Woody Allen, current through *New York Stories* (1989), concentrates its rather scattergun approach on Allen's "New York stories," specifically the Manhattan-based romantic comedies for which he is most popular: *Annie Hall*, *Manhattan*, and *Hannah and Her Sisters*. There are shorter passages on most of the other films, though some important work, notably *Broadway Danny Rose* and *Another Woman*, is largely passed over. A catchall chapter on Allen's nightclub work and early films aside, McCann bypasses chronology; rather than deal with Allen's work on a film-by-film basis McCann prefers to organize his thoughts into six chapters. The most interesting of these are the first, on Allen as a "New Yorker," and a later chapter on Allen as a "celebrity" struggling to maintain his "integrity." The chapter on Allen's romantic comedies (chiefly *Annie Hall*) is confusingly titled "Love and Death"; more logically, the chapter on Allen and his relationship to movies is called "Stardust Memories" (although the one film it discusses at length is *The Purple Rose of Cairo*). The final chapter, mostly on *Hannah and Her Sisters*, concludes that Allen has at last begun "to trust" and approvingly quotes *Hannah*: "Maybe love is the only answer." One has to wonder what McCann made of *Crimes and Misdemeanors*, an almost savage auto-critique of the New York films' willed affirmations—not that that film didn't end on a willed affirmation of its own.

McCann is an erudite writer who knows his subject well; his habit of footnoting within the text, while distracting, demonstrates the detail work he's done. He compares Allen to Saul Bellow as readily as to Bob Hope and is as ready (almost too ready) to cite Adorno or Walter Benjamin to make a point as he is Groucho Marx. Many insights are scattered throughout the text—to take one example at random, McCann usefully suggests that Jack Lemmon's screen character of the early 1960s was a precursor of Allen's of the 1970s—which, despite some lapses, does as good a job as explicating Allen's themes and philosophy, while taking it at face value, as is possible. The key phrase is of course

Hollywood with capitalism) a correlation between textual features and cultural effects. A less cynical construal would describe the relation of formal to cultural analyses as historically motivated, the product less of "theory" than of particular "discursive practices" or "regularities" as David Rodowick (anticipating Bordwell's "routines and practices" notion) has framed the matter. Indeed, in *The Crisis of Political Modernism* Rodowick has observed how film criticism's attentiveness to the "materiality" of cinema, explicitly to circumstances of production and consumption, these taken as *determining* the social effectivity of a given instance of cinema, effectively "naturalizes" the institution of academic criticism itself by denying *its* history and effectivity. (The movie made me do it!) Yet Bordwell and Rodowick are both very explicit in claiming that the meaning critics make is profoundly underdetermined by the film texts under analysis.

The "closeness" which most matters in *Close Viewings*, then, is closeness to a particular set of institutional protocols and routines which render certain "semantic fields" and "text schemata" and rule-of-thumb "heuristics" institutionally salient. As a pedagogical device for inculcating those routines in a new generation of viewers *Close Viewings* is exemplary. What troubles *this* reader is the degree to which Lehman and his colleagues generally avoid elucidation of the institutional circumstances which make books like *Close Viewings* possible in the first place. Lehman's symptomatically sketchy definition of "close"—as urging us to "be careful to support the significance we attribute" to a film—avoids the history which makes "close" a contested concept while expressing (and repressing) real anxiety about the institutional practice of film criticism. The only essay in *Close Viewings* which comes near to offering a critique of the orthodox "Classical Narrative Cinema" model, for example, is Noel Carroll's revisionary analysis (in "Buster Keaton, *The General* and Visible Intelligibility") of Bazin's "image vs. reality" theory. By the analytic standards of Carroll's *Mystifying Movies* it is muted critique indeed. Perhaps "close" is a matter of normative "good manners" after all. An introductory text can hardly cover all bases. *Close Viewings* deserves a long and happy classroom life. But I can't help thinking that a better sketch of the playing field would have made for a better book.

LELAND POAGUE

Woody Allen

By Graham McCann. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1990. $24.95.

Graham McCann's study of Woody Allen, current through *New York Stories* (1989), concentrates its rather scattergun approach on Allen's "New York stories," specifically the Manhattan-based romantic comedies for which he is most popular: *Annie Hall*, *Manhattan*, and *Hannah and Her Sisters*. There are shorter passages on most of the other films, though some important work, notably *Broadway Danny Rose* and *Another Woman*, is largely passed over. A catchall chapter on Allen's nightclub work and early films aside, McCann bypasses chronology; rather than deal with Allen's work on a film-by-film basis McCann prefers to organize his thoughts into six chapters. The most interesting of these are the first, on Allen as a "New Yorker," and a later chapter on Allen as a "celebrity" struggling to maintain his "integrity." The chapter on Allen's romantic comedies (chiefly *Annie Hall*) is confusingly titled "Love and Death"; more logically, the chapter on Allen and his relationship to movies is called "Stardust Memories" (although the one film it discusses at length is *The Purple Rose of Cairo*). The final chapter, mostly on *Hannah and Her Sisters*, concludes that Allen has at last begun "to trust" and approvingly quotes *Hannah*: "Maybe love is the only answer." One has to wonder what McCann made of *Crimes and Misdemeanors*, an almost savage auto-critique of the New York films' willed affirmations—not that that film didn't end on a willed affirmation of its own.

McCann is an erudite writer who knows his subject well; his habit of footnoting within the text, while distracting, demonstrates the detail work he's done. He compares Allen to Saul Bellow as readily as to Bob Hope and is as ready (almost too ready) to cite Adorno or Walter Benjamin to make a point as he is Groucho Marx. Many insights are scattered throughout the text—to take one example at random, McCann usefully suggests that Jack Lemmon's screen character of the early 1960s was a precursor of Allen's of the 1970s—which, despite some lapses, does as good a job as explicating Allen's themes and philosophy, while taking it at face value, as is possible. The key phrase is of course

"face value." What is now needed is a more critical study of Allen's privileged place in the American film ecology of the past twenty years, a more careful study of Allen's film-making strategies (his camerawork and editing, not just explication of dialogue), and a more searching look at his handling of those themes (life, love, sex, and death) that obviously mean so much to Allen. The question is not should Ingmar Bergman be Allen's role model, but do Allen's films sustain detailed *critical* analysis the way Bergman's do? I think Allen's would, but the question is still open.

GREGG RICKMAN

Satyajit Ray
A Study of His Films

By Ben Nyce. New York: Praeger, 1988. $37.95

There is a surprising paucity of critical scholarship on the cinema of Indian film-maker Satyajit Ray. Eric Rhode's study of *Apur Sansar* (The World of Apu), which was published in *Sight and Sound* in the summer of 1961, is the earliest. In 1971, Marie Seton's biocritical *Portrait of a Director*, and Robin Wood's auteurist monograph, *The Apu Trilogy*, followed. In 1980, Indian film critic Chidananda Das Gupta brought out a hurriedly written critical book, *The Cinema of Satyajit Ray*, to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the release of Ray's first film *Pather Panchali* at the Indian Film Festival Filmutsav 80. Now comes Ben Nyce's book *Satyajit Ray: A Study of his Films*, published in 1988. (To this pantheon must be added Andrew Robinson's 1990 critical biography *Satyajit Ray*, published by the University of California Press and thus excluded from review in this journal.)

In preparation for seven years, this is a chronological approach to Ray's 28 films: from *Pather Panchali* (Song of the Road—1955) to *Ghare Baire* (The Home and the World—1984). Nyce also takes into account Ray's documentary on *Rabindranath Tagore* (1961), two short films, *The Inner Eye* (1974) which is a 20-minute documentary on one of India's most celebrated painters, the blind Binod Behari Mukherjee, and *Two*, a 13-minute dramatic film, completely silent, made in 1964 for Esso's television program "World Drama." Nyce also tries to come to terms with Ray's films for children, which to the best of my knowledge have never been shown in the West, namely *Sonar Kella* (The Golden Fortress—1974), *Joi Baba Feluhath* (The Elephant God—1979), and *Hirod Rajar Deshe* (The Kingdom of Diamonds—1980). One can also add to this list *Pikoo's Day*, a 23-minute film done for French television in 1981.

While the scope of the book is ambitious, the critical treatments of the films are very uneven. Nyce is on shaky ground when he is covering the early Ray period. He becomes more confident, however, as he moves into Ray's more contemporary, urban works. He is more at ease with Ray's Westernized Indian characters than with his Bengali ones. Since his auteurist approach demands the critical eye to hover over each film independently, the book comes through as a collection of film reviews on Ray. Such an approach is always open to the hazard of bias and selective criticism. Those films that don't interest Nyce, like *Nayak* (The Hero), *Parash Pathar* (The Philosopher's Stone), *Ashani Sanket* (The Distant Thunder) get very short shrift. Those that really interest him are the Calcutta films where he can relate to the contemporary Indians, their problems and relationships, their middle-class struggles and existential choices —steeped as most of them are in patterning their lives according to Western value systems. What we get with such an approach is the inability, on Nyce's part, to trace or indicate critically the *growth* of the film-maker, or Ray's ability to choose different subjects and try, at considerable risk, to break out of his traditional classic style and humanist mould of film-making.

To a certain extent, Nyce's individual readings of Ray's films suffer from a critical lack of understanding of the social, historical, and cultural traditions of Bengal in particular and India in general within which the Ray films function. While Nyce does start by making a genuine effort to create this framework when he says in his opening chapter that "the main emphasis in films like *The Chess Players*, *The Music Room*, *Charulata*, etc. is upon the growth of the movement for independence from England, a major Brahmo interest . . . ",[1] in his actual evaluation of these films only passing references are made to very crucial and important

"face value." What is now needed is a more critical study of Allen's privileged place in the American film ecology of the past twenty years, a more careful study of Allen's film-making strategies (his camerawork and editing, not just explication of dialogue), and a more searching look at his handling of those themes (life, love, sex, and death) that obviously mean so much to Allen. The question is not should Ingmar Bergman be Allen's role model, but do Allen's films sustain detailed *critical* analysis the way Bergman's do? I think Allen's would, but the question is still open.

GREGG RICKMAN

Satyajit Ray
A Study of His Films

By Ben Nyce. New York: Praeger, 1988. $37.95

There is a surprising paucity of critical scholarship on the cinema of Indian film-maker Satyajit Ray. Eric Rhode's study of *Apur Sansar* (The World of Apu), which was published in *Sight and Sound* in the summer of 1961, is the earliest. In 1971, Marie Seton's biocritical *Portrait of a Director*, and Robin Wood's auteurist monograph, *The Apu Trilogy*, followed. In 1980, Indian film critic Chidananda Das Gupta brought out a hurriedly written critical book, *The Cinema of Satyajit Ray*, to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the release of Ray's first film *Pather Panchali* at the Indian Film Festival Filmutsav 80. Now comes Ben Nyce's book *Satyajit Ray: A Study of his Films*, published in 1988. (To this pantheon must be added Andrew Robinson's 1990 critical biography *Satyajit Ray*, published by the University of California Press and thus excluded from review in this journal.)

In preparation for seven years, this is a chronological approach to Ray's 28 films: from *Pather Panchali* (Song of the Road—1955) to *Ghare Baire* (The Home and the World—1984). Nyce also takes into account Ray's documentary on *Rabindranath Tagore* (1961), two short films, *The Inner Eye* (1974) which is a 20-minute documentary on one of India's most celebrated painters, the blind Binod Behari Mukherjee, and *Two*, a 13-minute dramatic film, completely silent, made in 1964 for Esso's television program "World Drama." Nyce also tries to come to terms with Ray's films for children, which to the best of my knowledge have never been shown in the West, namely *Sonar Kella* (The Golden Fortress—1974), *Joi Baba Feluhath* (The Elephant God—1979), and *Hirod Rajar Deshe* (The Kingdom of Diamonds—1980). One can also add to this list *Pikoo's Day*, a 23-minute film done for French television in 1981.

While the scope of the book is ambitious, the critical treatments of the films are very uneven. Nyce is on shaky ground when he is covering the early Ray period. He becomes more confident, however, as he moves into Ray's more contemporary, urban works. He is more at ease with Ray's Westernized Indian characters than with his Bengali ones. Since his auteurist approach demands the critical eye to hover over each film independently, the book comes through as a collection of film reviews on Ray. Such an approach is always open to the hazard of bias and selective criticism. Those films that don't interest Nyce, like *Nayak* (The Hero), *Parash Pathar* (The Philosopher's Stone), *Ashani Sanket* (The Distant Thunder) get very short shrift. Those that really interest him are the Calcutta films where he can relate to the contemporary Indians, their problems and relationships, their middle-class struggles and existential choices —steeped as most of them are in patterning their lives according to Western value systems. What we get with such an approach is the inability, on Nyce's part, to trace or indicate critically the *growth* of the film-maker, or Ray's ability to choose different subjects and try, at considerable risk, to break out of his traditional classic style and humanist mould of film-making.

To a certain extent, Nyce's individual readings of Ray's films suffer from a critical lack of understanding of the social, historical, and cultural traditions of Bengal in particular and India in general within which the Ray films function. While Nyce does start by making a genuine effort to create this framework when he says in his opening chapter that "the main emphasis in films like *The Chess Players*, *The Music Room*, *Charulata*, etc. is upon the growth of the movement for independence from England, a major Brahmo interest . . . ",[1] in his actual evaluation of these films only passing references are made to very crucial and important

Indian happenings like the Brahmo Movement. The only essay where Nyce is forced to deal with history is his piece on the Tagore documentary. But even here, he leans very heavily on his acknowledged source, David Koff's *The Brahmo Samaj*.

In the earlier sections of the book, Nyce often lapses into hazy, almost mystical notions of the "spirituality" of India. As an Indian, I am rather tired of seeing the word "spirit" uttered so freely and so arbitrarily by western critics and commentators. Ray never puts haloes around his characters. It is his western critics who insist on doing so. In Nyce's review of *Apur Sansar*, for instance, he tends to explain the Apu/Krishna fusing in the following way:

> It doesn't seem too farfetched to suggest that Apu himself has elements of the God Krishna within him and that he himself is going through stages of regeneration which can be likened to incarnations. Ray's need to use different actors to play the growing Apu even makes a contribution here. As Apu's spirit moves through its various growths, his body takes different forms. He is both single and multiple. He is the same Apu throughout the Trilogy, and yet he is in the process of becoming different from his prior selves—or, more accurately, of becoming more and more himself. (30)

This is totally misleading. It adds a metaphysical dimension to the film that is never there in the first place. Apu's Krishnaness is seen only on the level of his physical attractiveness. Women are attracted to him, though his timidity somehow makes him fail to take advantage of his Krishna attributes. By insisting on all this redundant business of incarnations and regenerations, Nyce seems to promote the typical Westerner's Fodor Guide version of looking at another culture in the exotic Third World way. Words like spirituality, regeneration, incarnation, become convenient labels imposed by the Western world to explain, often very wrongly, important "differences" in a culture totally unfamiliar to them.

Nyce's strengths, however, lie in his literary descents into characterizations and relationships, two subjects that interest him the most in Ray's work. He is very good at illuminating the interactions between Ray's wonderfully essayed characters. Nyce's discussions of the comic scenes between parents and children in *Sampati* (The End) are accurate and nicely balanced between Nyce's account of Ray's creative use of *mise-en-scène* and dissolves. In his essay on *Mahanagar* (The Big City), he sums up extremely well the differences between Westernized femininity, represented by the Anglo-Indian character of Edith Simmons, and Arati's heroic efforts to transcend her own traditional Bengali womanhood in an effort to become like Edith. Nyce is good at catching all the nuances and little moments that Ray is so good at. In his essay on *Charulata*, Nyce spends a lot of time on many important issues often missed by Indian as well as Western critics. In an effective paragraph, for instance, Nyce very convincingly shows us how "Charulata's growth is linked throughout the film to the act of writing." The scene where Charu determines to write her first "publishable" essay is evaluated extremely well by Nyce, especially when he shows how Charu's gesture is a bold one since it is enunciated in defiant opposition to the whole Bengali masculine world of writing and publishing.

Nyce's essays on *Aranyer Din Ratri* (Nights and Days in the Forest) and *Seemabhadda* (Company Ltd) are the most satisfying in the collection. In the former, Nyce deals at length with a character, the gambler and playboy Shekar, whom many critics don't pay much attention to because they feel that since he is portrayed by the popular comedian Robi Ghosh, Ray is using him only for comic relief. Nyce avoids falling into this trap and very skillfully enlarges Shekar's importance: far from being a stock marginal character, he performs crucial and interesting functions in the narrative as the predominantly male group's main catalyst. In the latter film, Nyce movingly depicts, again through Ray's *mise-en-scène* and lighting, the growing complicity between the budding young executive Shyamalendu and his attractive sister-in-law Tutul. He captures extremely well the "desultory rhythm of small talk and the underlying feeling of things left unsaid" that bring about a temporary bonding before the final estrangement between the two.

Nyce's strengths offer a lot of interesting insights into Ray's later work, and come as a proper and sound rejoinder, especially to Indian critics like Das Gupta, who in his book on Ray displays a stubborn unwillingness to accept Ray's new filmic concerns and demonstrates an entrenched prefer-

ence for the aesthetic vision and classical style of the early Ray at the expense of the new one. Das Gupta, in his analysis of *Prathidwandi* (The Rival), dismissed most of Ray's newly acquired fragmented cinematic vocabulary as "gimmicks," concluding "It is as if Ray is out to prove that when it comes to gimmicks, he can invent them just as well as anyone else, perhaps better." (*The Cinema of Satyajit Ray*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1980, p. 50.) Nyce, quite rightly, points out in his essay on the same film that such a vocabulary is needed to take us into the troubled psyche of the film's protagonist. His critical evaluation of these "inner" sequences is effectively rendered.

Having balanced, thus, the weaknesses with the strengths, on the whole one can say of Ben Nyce's seven-year effort that people wanting to write on Ray in future can learn a lot from his sincere attempt at coming to terms with the complex world of Satyajit Ray. DARIUS COOPER

Before the Wall Came Down

Soviet and East European Filmmakers Working in the West

Edited by Graham Petrie and Ruth Dwyer. Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 1990. $21.75 paper, $41.25 hardcover.

Before the Wall Came Down is a retroactively titled anthology bringing together the proceedings of a conference on "Soviet and East European Filmmakers Working in the West" held at McMaster University in Ontario in March 1989. The underlying assumptions of the papers are thus based on political conditions that, miraculously, no longer obtained after that autumn. Yet the main issues dealt with by the conference—the creative freedom and ability to work of artists moving from one restrictive environment to another—is more timely than ever.

Graham Petrie, the volume's co-editor, has already written at length (in his *Hollywood Destinies*) about European directors of the past who've come West, and his introduction reminds us that such Hollywood names as Curtiz and Lubitsch hailed from *Mitteleuropa*. But while "the stability and predictability of the old (Hollywood) system" allowed emigres like Wilder "to carve out brilliant and distinctive careers by manipulating the system to their advantage," modern Hollywood is "a climate even more hostile to the quirky and eccentric individual than was the case in 1920."

> East and Central European directors in particular, accustomed to a state-subsidized system that protects them from the vagaries of the market-place and the need to prove themselves commercially, and trained to see film as an art and a medium for personal expression rather than as an anonymous commodity to be sold to a mass audience, find themselves particularly vulnerable in this environment and—unlike most of their predecessors—they are deprived of the choice of going home once they find they cannot fit in. They have to adapt or perish. . . .

The result is a blighted career, whether or not they succeed in making films in the West. Two of the more interesting papers give first-hand testimony to this: Alexander Batchan's interview with Soviet emigre Slava Tsukerman (who pulled off a personal work with *Liquid Sky* in 1983, and has produced nothing since), and Slawomir Grunberg's testimony on his own and his colleague's rough road since leaving Poland. Indeed, the one paper on a director who would seem to be a rare triumphant exception to this, George Lellis's on Milos Forman's *Amadeus*, takes him to task for adopting an overly obvious narrative style, and Tsukerman's comments on him echo this complaint: "[He] probably decided not to take any more chances and to start making regular American films."

Whether or not Forman's work has declined, he has undeniably adapted; but I find that his later work expresses the same thematic conflict (a creative, willful outsider being crushed by authority) as his early work in Czechoslovakia, however his style may have been "cushioned," as Lellis claims. The conference, though, concentrated not on "success" stories like Forman's but rather on more marginal careers. There is nothing, some passing references aside, on Polanski (out of fashion, admittedly, but still working) and Ivan Passer, while coverage of Forman, as noted, and Jerzy Skolimowski are limited to single film analyses. Andrei Tarkovsky,

ence for the aesthetic vision and classical style of the early Ray at the expense of the new one. Das Gupta, in his analysis of *Prathidwandi* (The Rival), dismissed most of Ray's newly acquired fragmented cinematic vocabulary as "gimmicks," concluding "It is as if Ray is out to prove that when it comes to gimmicks, he can invent them just as well as anyone else, perhaps better." (*The Cinema of Satyajit Ray*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1980, p. 50.) Nyce, quite rightly, points out in his essay on the same film that such a vocabulary is needed to take us into the troubled psyche of the film's protagonist. His critical evaluation of these "inner" sequences is effectively rendered.

Having balanced, thus, the weaknesses with the strengths, on the whole one can say of Ben Nyce's seven-year effort that people wanting to write on Ray in future can learn a lot from his sincere attempt at coming to terms with the complex world of Satyajit Ray. DARIUS COOPER

Before the Wall Came Down

Soviet and East European Filmmakers Working in the West

Edited by Graham Petrie and Ruth Dwyer. Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 1990. $21.75 paper, $41.25 hardcover.

Before the Wall Came Down is a retroactively titled anthology bringing together the proceedings of a conference on "Soviet and East European Filmmakers Working in the West" held at McMaster University in Ontario in March 1989. The underlying assumptions of the papers are thus based on political conditions that, miraculously, no longer obtained after that autumn. Yet the main issues dealt with by the conference—the creative freedom and ability to work of artists moving from one restrictive environment to another—is more timely than ever.

Graham Petrie, the volume's co-editor, has already written at length (in his *Hollywood Destinies*) about European directors of the past who've come West, and his introduction reminds us that such Hollywood names as Curtiz and Lubitsch hailed from *Mitteleuropa*. But while "the stability and predictability of the old (Hollywood) system" allowed emigres like Wilder "to carve out brilliant and distinctive careers by manipulating the system to their advantage," modern Hollywood is "a climate even more hostile to the quirky and eccentric individual than was the case in 1920."

> East and Central European directors in particular, accustomed to a state-subsidized system that protects them from the vagaries of the market-place and the need to prove themselves commercially, and trained to see film as an art and a medium for personal expression rather than as an anonymous commodity to be sold to a mass audience, find themselves particularly vulnerable in this environment and—unlike most of their predecessors—they are deprived of the choice of going home once they find they cannot fit in. They have to adapt or perish. . . .

The result is a blighted career, whether or not they succeed in making films in the West. Two of the more interesting papers give first-hand testimony to this: Alexander Batchan's interview with Soviet emigre Slava Tsukerman (who pulled off a personal work with *Liquid Sky* in 1983, and has produced nothing since), and Slawomir Grunberg's testimony on his own and his colleague's rough road since leaving Poland. Indeed, the one paper on a director who would seem to be a rare triumphant exception to this, George Lellis's on Milos Forman's *Amadeus*, takes him to task for adopting an overly obvious narrative style, and Tsukerman's comments on him echo this complaint: "[He] probably decided not to take any more chances and to start making regular American films."

Whether or not Forman's work has declined, he has undeniably adapted; but I find that his later work expresses the same thematic conflict (a creative, willful outsider being crushed by authority) as his early work in Czechoslovakia, however his style may have been "cushioned," as Lellis claims. The conference, though, concentrated not on "success" stories like Forman's but rather on more marginal careers. There is nothing, some passing references aside, on Polanski (out of fashion, admittedly, but still working) and Ivan Passer, while coverage of Forman, as noted, and Jerzy Skolimowski are limited to single film analyses. Andrei Tarkovsky,

however, did pique enough interest to earn an entire session, and there are two papers on the long-eclipsed Dusan Makavejev, including an outstanding one by Bart Testa which makes the case that his key works *WR* and particularly *Sweet Movie* were "transgressive" works that violated art cinema norms. For this the director paid a heavy price: his current obscurity.

The conference was divided into five sessions, covering various national cinemas in two to five papers apiece, plus taped discussions, of which excerpts are given. The reader thus gains a sense of points being made and issues being raised and discussed; Petrie and his co-editor Ruth Dwyer have done an outstanding job at memorializing what must have been a very interesting gathering. Their work is a blueprint for future editors of such collections.

As must be the case at all such conferences, the results admit to unevenness, some papers excellent, others superficial. Most but not all of the conference participants addressed the issue of the difficulty of making a career in the West. There are a number of outstanding pieces in the collection dealing with the interaction of national cultures and the western dream. Catherine Portuges uses Marta Mészáros's career as emblematic for other Hungarians, like Janscó and Peter Gothar, who moved into international coproductions then back home again. Paul Coates's fine paper on contemporary Polish cinema notes how similar coproductions by Zanussi and Holland fall between cultures and how Krzysztof Kiesłowski's all-Polish films better express a true consciousness of exile. In the book's single most amusing piece Gerald Peary relates in fascinated detail how a recent visit to Yugoslavia revealed how obsessed the film community there is with Hollywood cinema. Talented young directors and gadfly critics alike read Sarris's *The American Cinema* as dogma and idolize John Ford. We are told they say that only "liberal Americans" are disturbed by the macho conservatism of such admired contemporaries as John Milius, Clint Eastwood, Walter Hill, and John Carpenter.

Several of the other papers presented formal analyses, of varying quality, of single works; of these the most stimulating pieces are Jim Leach's reading of *The Sacrifice*, Natasa Durovicova's of *Anna*, and Lellis's critique of *Amadeus*. The latter neatly combines a formal analysis of the film's average shot length with a sophisticated reading of Peter Shaffer's original play and some speculations about a posited "homosexual subtext." These all combine to account for his distaste for the movie: Forman makes Mozart a sort of "Pee Wee Herman" figure, with the "catty" Salieri a "gay stereotype" as well. I find Lellis's identification of a "homosexual subtext" with "de-eroticization," and even, in the film's rapid editing, "symbolic castration," murky and dubious.

Peter G. Christensen's paper on Skolimowski's *The Lightship* makes a complementary error. While Lellis's lack of clarity seems to stigmatize Forman's Mozart for his uncertain sexuality, Christensen takes offense at what he sees as *The Lightship*'s potentially "offensive, homophobic overtone" given that its villains (a character played by Robert Duvall, and his criminal entourage) are "presented as homosexuals." "The film has a regrettable fear of same-sex attraction." In my reading of the film, however, Duvall and his men seem more amoral than evil, and their sexuality is latent. Indeed, Duvall's playful dance with his sidekick Eddie presents a positive side to the characters; the villains consistently seem to emotionally care for each other as the Captain and his bickering crew (whose ship they have commandeered) do not. Similarly, when Eddie kisses the Captain's son, Alex, it is both out of attraction and to humiliate him; later on when Alex has a chance to kill Eddie and fails to, Skolimowski presents this as a move by the boy toward maturity. At the time Alex thinks, in voice-over, that he is, like his "old man," a coward, but the film eventually aligns both the boy and us with the wisdom of the father's passive resistance. The film, in short, is a complex narrative, in which "good" and "evil" are not divided up on traditional lines, and it should not be stigmatized as homophobic when it is not.

Obviously, this collection's interest is not limited to matters of overt concern with the fate of a group of artists: many other strands of current film study run through it. As instanced by the attention given Tarkovsky and Makavejev, some directors seem *sui generis*; I agree with most of the panelists that Tarkovsky's work formed a "single vision" both at home and abroad. Ultimately, though, the volume's central metaphor is "the Wall," and one has to wonder how the book plays

now, after the fall. Can state-supported cinema survive when the state is becoming capitalist? After reading paper after paper pointing out how the Big Time leaves no time for art, a remark in Patrick MacFadden's "Remarks on the Polish Session" seems the most prescient: "When Bertrand Russell visited the Soviet Union in the twenties, he came away lamenting that the Bolsheviks were taking a nation of artists and turning them into a nation of engineers. It would be unfortunate if here they found they had to metamorphose into sellers."

Now that "here" has become "there" it will be fortunate indeed if these artists and others like them do not become exiles in their own land.

GREGG RICKMAN

Modernist Montage

The Obscurity of Vision in Cinema and Literature

By P. Adams Sitney. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.

P. Adams Sitney's announced intention is to examine an aspect of the modernist sensibility that he calls "antinomy of vision"—the contradictory urge to "stress vision as a privileged mode of perception" and to challenge vision's privileged status through a carefully contrived "opacity" of language and/or image. However, it is the latter, "the obscurity of vision," that receives the most emphasis in Sitney's analysis of literary and cinematic texts by Mallarmé, Gertrude Stein, Maurice Blanchot, Charles Olson, Sidney Peterson, Man Ray, Duchamp, Dovzhenko, Vertov, Eisenstein, Dreyer, Bresson, Bergman, Brakhage, Straub/Huillet, Bruce Baillie, and George Landow (Owen Land).

In most cases only one or two works by a writer or film-maker receive detailed discussion: for example, Duchamp's *Anemic Cinema* and Man Ray's *Etoile de mer* in a chapter on "Image and Title in Surrealist Cinema," Dovzhenko's *Zvenigora* and Eisenstein's *Old and New* in a comparable chapter on "Image and Title in Soviet Cinema," *Ordet* and *Gertrude* in a chapter on Dreyer, only *Au moment voulu* in a chapter on Blanchot, and *Persona* in a chapter on Bergman, etc., etc. Nevertheless, the range of genres and personal styles represented is quite large and permits Sitney to demonstrate his considerable erudition and skill as an explicator of difficult modernist texts.

On the other hand, the relationship of some of the texts to the book's theme of visual antinomy is not only tangential, but "complicates or even contradicts the argument of this book" (as Sitney himself puts it when writing of Brakhage). In other words, Sitney does not try to hold the book together with a rigorous—or even logically consistent—theory of modernist responses to vision. "This," he writes in his introduction, "is a book of readings of modernist texts and films, not a theory of modernism."

Sitney's selection of "readings" seems to have been motivated by a preference for works that require an exceedingly clever and well-informed critic to explicate their irony, ambiguity, obscure allusions, arcane etymologies, private references, "unconscious" motivations, and complex interplay of tradition, individual talent, and innovation. Although these are precisely the characteristics of modernism emphasized by the "New Critics" of a past generation, Sitney's book should not be dismissed as a relic of a superannuated school of literary criticism. Not only is it informed by a knowledge and appreciation of film in general and avant-garde film in particular, which the old "New Critics" lacked, but many of its insights *are* new and intriguing (for this reader, among the most intriguing were Sitney's psychoanalytic reading of *Persona*, his tracing of a Latin reference in *Au moment voulu* to the parable of the wise and foolish virgins in Matthew 25, and his linking of both Brakhage's *Blue Moses* and Straub/Huillet's *Moses and Aaron* to Yahweh's refusal to reveal His face to Moses in Exodus 33). Moreover, some of Sitney's findings are pertinent to current reconsiderations of vision in the arts (though Sitney, himself, does not say so).

As demonstrated in a recent collection of essays entitled *Vision and Visuality* (edited by Hall Foster for the Dia Art Foundation series), the study of vision now crosses many disciplinary boundaries and enlists a broad range of theoretical and analytical approaches to vision as a physiological, psychological, philosophical, cultural, aesthetic, and technological phenomenon. As a medium based on the technology of vision, film offers innumerable possibilities for creative and critical explorations of vision and visuality—a fact that many avant-garde

now, after the fall. Can state-supported cinema survive when the state is becoming capitalist? After reading paper after paper pointing out how the Big Time leaves no time for art, a remark in Patrick MacFadden's "Remarks on the Polish Session" seems the most prescient: "When Bertrand Russell visited the Soviet Union in the twenties, he came away lamenting that the Bolsheviks were taking a nation of artists and turning them into a nation of engineers. It would be unfortunate if here they found they had to metamorphose into sellers."

Now that "here" has become "there" it will be fortunate indeed if these artists and others like them do not become exiles in their own land.

GREGG RICKMAN

Modernist Montage

The Obscurity of Vision in Cinema and Literature

By P. Adams Sitney. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.

P. Adams Sitney's announced intention is to examine an aspect of the modernist sensibility that he calls "antinomy of vision"—the contradictory urge to "stress vision as a privileged mode of perception" and to challenge vision's privileged status through a carefully contrived "opacity" of language and/or image. However, it is the latter, "the obscurity of vision," that receives the most emphasis in Sitney's analysis of literary and cinematic texts by Mallarmé, Gertrude Stein, Maurice Blanchot, Charles Olson, Sidney Peterson, Man Ray, Duchamp, Dovzhenko, Vertov, Eisenstein, Dreyer, Bresson, Bergman, Brakhage, Straub/Huillet, Bruce Baillie, and George Landow (Owen Land).

In most cases only one or two works by a writer or film-maker receive detailed discussion: for example, Duchamp's *Anemic Cinema* and Man Ray's *Etoile de mer* in a chapter on "Image and Title in Surrealist Cinema," Dovzhenko's *Zvenigora* and Eisenstein's *Old and New* in a comparable chapter on "Image and Title in Soviet Cinema," *Ordet* and *Gertrude* in a chapter on Dreyer, only *Au moment voulu* in a chapter on Blanchot, and *Persona* in a chapter on Bergman, etc., etc. Nevertheless, the range of genres and personal styles represented is quite large and permits Sitney to demonstrate his considerable erudition and skill as an explicator of difficult modernist texts.

On the other hand, the relationship of some of the texts to the book's theme of visual antinomy is not only tangential, but "complicates or even contradicts the argument of this book" (as Sitney himself puts it when writing of Brakhage). In other words, Sitney does not try to hold the book together with a rigorous—or even logically consistent—theory of modernist responses to vision. "This," he writes in his introduction, "is a book of readings of modernist texts and films, not a theory of modernism."

Sitney's selection of "readings" seems to have been motivated by a preference for works that require an exceedingly clever and well-informed critic to explicate their irony, ambiguity, obscure allusions, arcane etymologies, private references, "unconscious" motivations, and complex interplay of tradition, individual talent, and innovation. Although these are precisely the characteristics of modernism emphasized by the "New Critics" of a past generation, Sitney's book should not be dismissed as a relic of a superannuated school of literary criticism. Not only is it informed by a knowledge and appreciation of film in general and avant-garde film in particular, which the old "New Critics" lacked, but many of its insights *are* new and intriguing (for this reader, among the most intriguing were Sitney's psychoanalytic reading of *Persona*, his tracing of a Latin reference in *Au moment voulu* to the parable of the wise and foolish virgins in Matthew 25, and his linking of both Brakhage's *Blue Moses* and Straub/Huillet's *Moses and Aaron* to Yahweh's refusal to reveal His face to Moses in Exodus 33). Moreover, some of Sitney's findings are pertinent to current reconsiderations of vision in the arts (though Sitney, himself, does not say so).

As demonstrated in a recent collection of essays entitled *Vision and Visuality* (edited by Hall Foster for the Dia Art Foundation series), the study of vision now crosses many disciplinary boundaries and enlists a broad range of theoretical and analytical approaches to vision as a physiological, psychological, philosophical, cultural, aesthetic, and technological phenomenon. As a medium based on the technology of vision, film offers innumerable possibilities for creative and critical explorations of vision and visuality—a fact that many avant-garde

film-makers and a few directors of more conventional (though not necessarily popular) films, have accepted and exploited. (Sitney misleadingly contends that "the status of vision" has not been a subject of modernist debates. Among avant-garde film-makers, however, it has been debated from the 1920s onwards—as many of the articles in Sitney's own *Avant-Garde Film: A Reader of Theory and Criticism* clearly demonstrate.) Thus it becomes particularly significant to discover the film-makers in Sitney's study responding to vision with varying degrees of ambivalence, avoidance, and even hostility, be it in the form of attacks on "retinal art" à la Duchamp, or emphasizing verbal text (in the intertitles of silent film or voices on the sound track), or foregoing the use of shot-counter-shot and eyeline matches.

Although Sitney carefully examines these challenges to cinema's "scopic regime," he tends to use them only as evidence for interpretations of particular films; he leaves it up to the reader to recognize their broader implications for the study of vision and visuality in film. This, I think, is the unfortunate result of his decision to concentrate on readings of individual texts, rather than develop a theory that could explain what these texts, and others like them, have in common.

The lack of unifying theory produces even greater problems when Sitney turns to literary texts. Because issues of vision and visuality are harder to pin down in the symbolic codes of literature than in the iconic and indexical codes of film, the need to clarify theoretical issues and maintain a consistent line of argument is especially pressing. However, Sitney's suggestive insights into literary expressions of visual antinomies too frequently take the back seat to extended commentaries on other issues, such as oblique links to "poetic and narrative traditions of antiquity" in Mallarmé's sonnet "Ses pures ongles" and Blanchot's *Au moment voulu* (both very difficult works that Sitney handles with considerable aplomb), or the influence of Emerson on later American writers such as Stein and Olson.

More than once, his line of argument seems to go completely astray, as when he ends his chapter on Gertrude Stein with a comparison of Stein's and Charlie Chaplin's accounts of their meeting at a dinner party in Hollywood, or concludes his penultimate chapter with a discussion of Baillie's *All My Life*, which Sitney admits has nothing to do with the Biblical theme upon which the rest of the chapter is based. And the book's final chapter on several of Landow's films has virtually nothing to do with questions of vision—"obscure" or otherwise—and seems an inappropriate conclusion to a book that claims to focus on "the matter of the status of vision" in modernist film and literature. Like most of the other chapters in the book, it is more satisfactory as a separate essay than as a link in a chain of arguments and illustrations designed to clarify a single, central concept.

In fact, there is much to recommend the book as a collection of essays on some twentieth-century writers and film-makers who developed particularly interesting strategies for coping with modernism's contradictory demands—to make old mythologies new, to invest secular experience with religious significance, to make form the most significant content of art, to "stress vision as a privileged mode of perception, even of revelation, while at the same time cultivating opacity and questioning the primacy of the visible world." The last is, of course, the book's purported theme, and although it is frequently obscured by discussion of other modernist attributes, it is Sitney's most interesting and original contribution to the study of cinematic and literary modernism.

WILLIAM C. WEES

The Taste for Beauty

By Eric Rohmer. Trans. by Carol Volk. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989. $14.95 paper.

Eric Rohmer's reputation as the most rigid and dogmatic of the *Cahiers du Cinéma* critics of the 1950s is belied by the long overdue publication in English of this volume of his writing. Some 17 years after Godard's anthology crossed the Channel, and 11 years after Truffaut, Rohmer at last has the collection in English he deserves.

But then Rohmer, a full decade older than the older young men of the *Nouvelle Vague*, has always been a late starter. Thanks to Jean Narboni, who compiled this anthology in 1983 for *Cahiers*, and thanks to Cambridge University Press, who commissioned Carol Volk's outstanding translation, Rohmer's true importance can now be weighed. On

film-makers and a few directors of more conventional (though not necessarily popular) films, have accepted and exploited. (Sitney misleadingly contends that "the status of vision" has not been a subject of modernist debates. Among avant-garde film-makers, however, it has been debated from the 1920s onwards—as many of the articles in Sitney's own *Avant-Garde Film: A Reader of Theory and Criticism* clearly demonstrate.) Thus it becomes particularly significant to discover the film-makers in Sitney's study responding to vision with varying degrees of ambivalence, avoidance, and even hostility, be it in the form of attacks on "retinal art" à la Duchamp, or emphasizing verbal text (in the intertitles of silent film or voices on the sound track), or foregoing the use of shot-counter-shot and eyeline matches.

Although Sitney carefully examines these challenges to cinema's "scopic regime," he tends to use them only as evidence for interpretations of particular films; he leaves it up to the reader to recognize their broader implications for the study of vision and visuality in film. This, I think, is the unfortunate result of his decision to concentrate on readings of individual texts, rather than develop a theory that could explain what these texts, and others like them, have in common.

The lack of unifying theory produces even greater problems when Sitney turns to literary texts. Because issues of vision and visuality are harder to pin down in the symbolic codes of literature than in the iconic and indexical codes of film, the need to clarify theoretical issues and maintain a consistent line of argument is especially pressing. However, Sitney's suggestive insights into literary expressions of visual antinomies too frequently take the back seat to extended commentaries on other issues, such as oblique links to "poetic and narrative traditions of antiquity" in Mallarmé's sonnet "Ses pures ongles" and Blanchot's *Au moment voulu* (both very difficult works that Sitney handles with considerable aplomb), or the influence of Emerson on later American writers such as Stein and Olson.

More than once, his line of argument seems to go completely astray, as when he ends his chapter on Gertrude Stein with a comparison of Stein's and Charlie Chaplin's accounts of their meeting at a dinner party in Hollywood, or concludes his penultimate chapter with a discussion of Baillie's *All My Life*, which Sitney admits has nothing to do with the Biblical theme upon which the rest of the chapter is based. And the book's final chapter on several of Landow's films has virtually nothing to do with questions of vision—"obscure" or otherwise—and seems an inappropriate conclusion to a book that claims to focus on "the matter of the status of vision" in modernist film and literature. Like most of the other chapters in the book, it is more satisfactory as a separate essay than as a link in a chain of arguments and illustrations designed to clarify a single, central concept.

In fact, there is much to recommend the book as a collection of essays on some twentieth-century writers and film-makers who developed particularly interesting strategies for coping with modernism's contradictory demands—to make old mythologies new, to invest secular experience with religious significance, to make form the most significant content of art, to "stress vision as a privileged mode of perception, even of revelation, while at the same time cultivating opacity and questioning the primacy of the visible world." The last is, of course, the book's purported theme, and although it is frequently obscured by discussion of other modernist attributes, it is Sitney's most interesting and original contribution to the study of cinematic and literary modernism.

WILLIAM C. WEES

The Taste for Beauty

By Eric Rohmer. Trans. by Carol Volk. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989. $14.95 paper.

Eric Rohmer's reputation as the most rigid and dogmatic of the *Cahiers du Cinéma* critics of the 1950s is belied by the long overdue publication in English of this volume of his writing. Some 17 years after Godard's anthology crossed the Channel, and 11 years after Truffaut, Rohmer at last has the collection in English he deserves.

But then Rohmer, a full decade older than the older young men of the *Nouvelle Vague*, has always been a late starter. Thanks to Jean Narboni, who compiled this anthology in 1983 for *Cahiers*, and thanks to Cambridge University Press, who commissioned Carol Volk's outstanding translation, Rohmer's true importance can now be weighed. On

the evidence of this volume alone Rohmer may well be a more important theorist than either Godard or Truffaut, particularly given their tendency to polemicize as opposed to Rohmer's more meditative style. Indeed, Rohmer seems, of all the *Cahiers* critics, the most thoughtful and the truest heir of André Bazin. As William Rothman writes in his foreword, "the essays in this volume, which speak to us from a bygone age, are nonetheless . . . stunningly contemporary."

In his biography of André Bazin, Dudley Andrew defines Rohmer as "an absolutist...opposed to the catholicity of Bazin's evolutionary view of the cinema, where all films become valuable when seen in the light of the development of the art. For Rohmer there existed only certain masterworks or, rather, certain master artists who alone were worth according attention and homage." (Andrew, *André Bazin*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1978, page 222.) There is much to contradict Andrew's summary dismissal in this new volume: indeed, Rohmer's willingness to see virtue in films and directors largely passed over by the *politique* is one of his strongest assets. One feels, in his lucid examination of the failure of Huston's *Moby Dick*, and in his "defence" of Logan's *South Pacific*, that those films are receiving the fairest consideration possible. His favorable reviews of Tashlin's *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?* and Cukor's *Les Girls*, meanwhile, contribute stimulating insights into films that don't immediately come to mind when one thinks of the *Cahiers* party-line. Not for Rohmer the febrile enthusiasms of his colleagues; Rohmer does not exclaim that "the cinema is Nicholas Ray" (that was Godard), he rather calmly examines the *mise-en-scène* of Ray's *Bigger Than Life* as a way of determining how Ray's film is cinema.

This is a selection of Rohmer's writing, not the complete work. The essays printed cover the years 1948 to 1979, from his early work for *La Revue du Cinéma* and *Les Temps Modernes* (when he was still writing under his given name, Maurice Schérer) through his reviews for *Cahiers* before and during the *Nouvelle Vague*, to more recent statements occasioned by the release of his own films. The 1983 interview is especially important, fitting as it does Rohmer's early writing into the perspective of his present beliefs, and also providing some useful background on the era when most of the pieces were written.

Some of Rohmer's more important pieces are missing, and perhaps their inclusion would give Andrew's censure more weight. We have Rohmer, for example, on *Bigger Than Life*, but not on *Rebel Without a Cause* (an essay the later piece refers to). Conspicuously absent, at the author's demand, is the five-part essay "Celluloid and Marble" (1955) which compared film favorably to all other arts and which he now considers, he tells Narboni, "horribly naive." He was speaking then, he says, from the perspective of "a film buff." (The essay was in fact partially translated in the 1980 BFI Reader *Realism and the Cinema*, although one wouldn't know it from this book's notes. The *Rebel* essay is in Jim Hillier's Harvard University Press anthology of *Cahiers* in the 1950s; again, this is not commented on here.)

What there is in the book is impressive enough. Narboni breaks the volume into four parts, two theoretical (on "The Classical Age of Cinema" and "For an Impure Cinema") and two on particular films and directors. There are many insights here, both large and small. Rohmer may have been the first critic to coin the critical commonplace comparing Buster Keaton to Franz Kafka—in 1948! Some of the most interesting pieces are occasioned by documentaries: a film on mountain climbing, Clouzot's documentary on Picasso, and television coverage of the 1960 Olympics. In them he probes the documentary nature of film, wherein "Space and Time reign supreme." Indeed, he extends this interest in film's recording capacity to fiction films: "Don't most films," he writes in 1951, "treat something in the process of being done . . . ? Charlie the tramp, Buster the cook or the mechanic, Zorro, Scarface, Kane, Marlowe. . . ." In this, as in much else, he follows Bazin: in his 1959 obituary for him —the heart of the book—he writes "We are left with the difficult job of continuing his task." Twenty-four years later he tells Narboni "all I'm doing is organizing Bazin's ideas."

It is certainly true that Rohmer's writing, like Bazin's, can perhaps best be described as a continual, ongoing effort to define the nature of cinema. Rohmer employs several different metaphors in this search: Time, Space, comparisons to the other arts. Architecture is a particular favorite of his, particularly in his review of *Vertigo*, which evolves into a brilliant discussion of the "obsessive presence of a double geometrical motif."

Bazin is Rohmer's guiding star, though it should be noted that Rohmer demonstrates familiarity with the writings of other theorists, such as Eisentein and Arnheim, he's not necessarily a fan of. Readers of Richard Abel's seminal anthology of early French theory will be glad to note Rohmer's references to Louis Delluc, demonstrating as this does a through-line from pre-Bazinian days to the modern era.

Dudley Andrew's summary critique comments "Rohmer turned his beliefs into the romantic criticism of great personalities." (*André Bazin*, 222.) The section on Jean Renoir, with which Narboni ends this anthology, is particularly strong, and demonstrates to a degree Andrew's stricture. But only to a degree—it is difficult to read it and not be repersuaded that "Renoir contains all of cinema"—at least as Rohmer defines it. This is the key point, for while Bazin (and Renoir) were very interested and involved in "the interaction of cinema with history and politics" (Andrew), Rohmer is not. Topical issues do not interest Rohmer. Through rather tendentious logic he demonstrates to his satisfaction, in the title essay, that Cassavetes's *Shadows* is not really about "the racial problem," but "*just any* situation" (the young man upset that his girlfriend is black could just as well have discovered that she was married), not really about young people, but "*just any* age," and could have, moreover, taken place in "*just any* social milieu." What interests him instead are "eternal" truths: a 1953 essay, for example, "Of Three Films and a Certain School," finds works by Renoir, Rossellini, and Hitchcock orchestrating "a spiritual challenge" to social inertia.

Rohmer's religious beliefs blend naturally into his subtle, supple, but very real conservatism. This conservatism is clear in his 1951 dismissal of avant-garde film-makers ("Richter, Buñuel, Anger") as the "rear guard," and is particularly obvious in his 1958 piece on *The Quiet American*, which defends Joseph Mankiewicz's gutting of Graham Greene's novel (which took, unlike the film, an early stance against America's presence in Vietnam). "I do not think anything has been erased from Graham Greene's work," he wrote, adding "I am of course speaking as a pure aesthete, as 'disengaged' as possible." Indeed.

Several of Rohmer's more arguable assertions are put into perspective by the 1983 interview with Narboni. Rohmer's statement that seeing Rossellini's *Stromboli* was "my road to Damascus," a conversion experience for him, away from Sartrean existentialism, may explain the harshness of his description, in his 1950 review, of the "interior emptiness" of the film's Ingrid Bergman character. "You went through the same changes as Ingrid Bergman did in the film," says Narboni, and Rohmer agrees: "Yes! It's extraordinary!"

Similarly, Rohmer had evolved by the mid-1960s away from the disdain he expresses in "Such Vanity is Painting" (1951) toward modern art (which "degrades man"). By 1965, we learn, he had concluded that "loving film doesn't prevent him (the film buff) from being open to contemporary art." Indeed, in 1983 we find him strongly critical of "cinephile culture," which feeds only on other films, something he urged in "Celluloid and Marble" but which he now regrets. "I think that there are other things in the world besides film and, conversely, that film feeds on things that exist outside it. I would even say that film is the art that can feed on itself the least."

Though obviously Rohmer's early writing forecasts their concerns, it is in his most recent pieces that we learn the most about Rohmer's own films. His "Letter to a Critic" (1971) defends his "Moral Tales" from the charge of being too literary, while his essay "Film and the Three Levels of Discourse" (1977) is a fascinating discussion of the "indirect discourse" of *The Marquise of O . . .* , casting a great deal of light on that masterpiece. Anyone with the slightest interest in film and literature, or film as a language, could study this essay with profit.

Rohmer's criticism is, throughout the volume, a pleasure to read, not only for its insights but also as a means of observing the play of his very considerable intellect. His writing style is comparable to his filmic discourse in its unobtrusive lucidity and in its consistent striving to achieve a conversational tone with his reader, as for example in interjected comments like "One might say that I am moving rather quickly" or "I suppose I am preaching only to converts" in the essay on *Moby Dick*. This style contributes greatly to his writing's appeal, the "vibrant life" in his writing which William Rothman refers to in his foreword.

Rothman attempts to enlist Rohmer as a critic of contemporary film theory, which he finds "dead from the neck up and the neck down." The turn

twenty years ago toward "what is called 'theory'" in academic film study "repressed," he says, study of "the achievements of the masters of the art of film—that is, the films themselves—and the achievements of those critics who defied fashion and never abandoned criticism." "Rohmer's questions and ideas are fresh and alive today precisely because they have been repressed, not addressed, by film study."

Even if one agrees that the transition to High Theory twenty years ago incorporated some decidedly wrong turnings, I don't think a return to Rohmer's ideas of thirty-five years ago is the proper solution to the current impasse Rothman senses. Neither, I think, would Rohmer, who not only, in his interview with Narboni, disassociates himself from certain of his early notions, but adds, in explaining why he is a "reformist" and not a "revolutionary," "maintaining links with the past, with the works of the past, doesn't prevent our moving forward—quite the opposite. . . . I've always been against destruction. I think that in order to build, we mustn't destroy. . . . New structures must take their place next to old ones."

Let us take a cue from this and not try to demolish the temples to high theory erected by the *Screen* generation, however flawed we may find their "architecture." Rather let us step away from them, see what can be learned from them, and consulting the best of the old criticism for ideas, not blueprints, construct our own.

With Abel's anthology and the Harvard University Press *Cahiers* anthologies, this in one of the most useful books published anywhere in the last few years. And like the other volumes in the Cambridge Studies in Film series, it is handsomely produced and usefully indexed and annotated.

GREGG RICKMAN

Flashbacks in Film

Memory and History

By Maureen Turim. New York: Routledge, 1989. $45.00 cloth, $14.95 paper

If ever a specific cinematic technique deserved a serious, full-length study devoted to its theory and practice it is the flashback. Although one cannot say that flashbacks have actually been neglected in previous scholarship,[1] no earlier work has given this device the sustained attention that it merits due to its key role in film history.

Turim begins her study by defining the term and outlining her broad range of theoretical approaches; she cites—among others—Russian formalism, narrative theory à la Gerald Genette and Roland Barthes, deconstruction, semiotics, psychoperceptual theory, and psychoanalysis.

Turim has chosen to tackle her subject through a chronological tracing of the development of the flashback from the earliest silents to the contemporary avant-garde, employing these theoretical approaches a dab at a time depending upon which is most suited to the film under discussion. Thus, her second chapter outlines the use of flashbacks in American silent films, finding that while "before 1910 the flashback is not easily distinguishable" from related techniques, by the teens the technique appears to have been quite common (28). She outlines here the most important functions of these flashbacks, including, for example: to create suspense, to explain character motivation, for emotional symbolism (in Griffith's films), to compensate for the silents' lack of dialogue, etc.

Chapter 3 addresses the use of flashbacks in the silent era in Italy, France, Sweden, Germany, and Japan. Turim offers an extended discussion of the use of flashbacks by impressionist French films: "No longer a vision of an objective world, the flashback images of the impressionist films distort spatio-temporal relations and transform visual codes of representation to indicate the thought patterns, the feelings, and even the functioning of the psyches of the characters" (69). She also dwells on the way that German expressionist films link their flashbacks to characters' psyches.

Her next two chapters return to America and fall into a more genre-based analysis. "The Subjectivity of History in Hollywood Sound Films" deals primarily with pseudo-biographies, with films set during World War II, and with films about Hollywood itself. Turim finds that for the most part, "These films render historical thought as the subjective experience of individuals by creating both the present and the past which inserts itself in the present as a series of highly personal experiences" (122–3). "Flashbacks and the Psyche in Melodrama and Film Noir" primarily analyzes the use of flashbacks by these two important genres. This chapter

twenty years ago toward "what is called 'theory'" in academic film study "repressed," he says, study of "the achievements of the masters of the art of film—that is, the films themselves—and the achievements of those critics who defied fashion and never abandoned criticism." "Rohmer's questions and ideas are fresh and alive today precisely because they have been repressed, not addressed, by film study."

Even if one agrees that the transition to High Theory twenty years ago incorporated some decidedly wrong turnings, I don't think a return to Rohmer's ideas of thirty-five years ago is the proper solution to the current impasse Rothman senses. Neither, I think, would Rohmer, who not only, in his interview with Narboni, disassociates himself from certain of his early notions, but adds, in explaining why he is a "reformist" and not a "revolutionary," "maintaining links with the past, with the works of the past, doesn't prevent our moving forward—quite the opposite. . . . I've always been against destruction. I think that in order to build, we mustn't destroy. . . . New structures must take their place next to old ones."

Let us take a cue from this and not try to demolish the temples to high theory erected by the *Screen* generation, however flawed we may find their "architecture." Rather let us step away from them, see what can be learned from them, and consulting the best of the old criticism for ideas, not blueprints, construct our own.

With Abel's anthology and the Harvard University Press *Cahiers* anthologies, this in one of the most useful books published anywhere in the last few years. And like the other volumes in the Cambridge Studies in Film series, it is handsomely produced and usefully indexed and annotated.

GREGG RICKMAN

Flashbacks in Film

Memory and History

By Maureen Turim. New York: Routledge, 1989. $45.00 cloth, $14.95 paper

If ever a specific cinematic technique deserved a serious, full-length study devoted to its theory and practice it is the flashback. Although one cannot say that flashbacks have actually been neglected in previous scholarship,[1] no earlier work has given this device the sustained attention that it merits due to its key role in film history.

Turim begins her study by defining the term and outlining her broad range of theoretical approaches; she cites—among others—Russian formalism, narrative theory à la Gerald Genette and Roland Barthes, deconstruction, semiotics, psychoperceptual theory, and psychoanalysis.

Turim has chosen to tackle her subject through a chronological tracing of the development of the flashback from the earliest silents to the contemporary avant-garde, employing these theoretical approaches a dab at a time depending upon which is most suited to the film under discussion. Thus, her second chapter outlines the use of flashbacks in American silent films, finding that while "before 1910 the flashback is not easily distinguishable" from related techniques, by the teens the technique appears to have been quite common (28). She outlines here the most important functions of these flashbacks, including, for example: to create suspense, to explain character motivation, for emotional symbolism (in Griffith's films), to compensate for the silents' lack of dialogue, etc.

Chapter 3 addresses the use of flashbacks in the silent era in Italy, France, Sweden, Germany, and Japan. Turim offers an extended discussion of the use of flashbacks by impressionist French films: "No longer a vision of an objective world, the flashback images of the impressionist films distort spatio-temporal relations and transform visual codes of representation to indicate the thought patterns, the feelings, and even the functioning of the psyches of the characters" (69). She also dwells on the way that German expressionist films link their flashbacks to characters' psyches.

Her next two chapters return to America and fall into a more genre-based analysis. "The Subjectivity of History in Hollywood Sound Films" deals primarily with pseudo-biographies, with films set during World War II, and with films about Hollywood itself. Turim finds that for the most part, "These films render historical thought as the subjective experience of individuals by creating both the present and the past which inserts itself in the present as a series of highly personal experiences" (122–3). "Flashbacks and the Psyche in Melodrama and Film Noir" primarily analyzes the use of flashbacks by these two important genres. This chapter

makes particular use of psychoanalytic theory (with fascinating insights).

Her last chapter, "Disjunction in the Modern Flashback," studies the impact of modernism. Turim starts with an overview of "Relative Truths and Subjectivity in Japanese Flashbacks" (e.g., *Rashomon*) and proceeds with an extended analysis of Alain Resnais's films which, she claims, "revel in the power to mimetically produce a model of the memory process; sometimes they reflexively question their power to represent memory or self-consciously question the nature of image memory. All these possibilities are interwoven, allowing for absolute belief . . . but also contesting this belief" (224). She also treats here the role of flashbacks in films about the Holocaust, the political use of flashbacks, the use of flashbacks by films from the Third World. She concludes (in a short and rather inadequate section) with a glance at the use of the technique by avant-garde film-makers.

The book has three great strengths. First, the thoroughness of Turim's research. She seems to have been undaunted in her pursuit of texts: her examples range from the earliest American silents, to foreign silents, to grade B studio sound films, to Third World contemporary films. Her covering of secondary sources also leaves little room for quibbling. Such thoroughness, of course, lends *Flashbacks in Film* credibility and authority.

Secondly, one must laud Turim's interdisciplinary approach. In most of her chapters Turim suspends her discussion of the films to talk about the intellectual climate in which the films were produced, particularly in terms of contemporaneous knowledge on memory, historiography, perceptual processing, and psychoanalysis. Thus, her treatment of American silent films also addresses Munsterberg's theories; philosopher Henri Bergson is discussed alongside of French impressionism; Freud is placed alongside of German Expressionism and melodramas; the historian R. G. Collingwood is juxtaposed with American "historical" films; current cognitive theories are compared with modernist practices. Turim is careful not to make any claims of direct influence or causal connections, but her placement of the films within a wider intellectual context is invariably fruitful.

Thirdly, one must be struck by the quality and quantity of her insights, particularly concerning the psychoanalytic and ideological underpinnings of many of the films (for example, her comments on "Death, Repetition and Fate Neurosis in Film Noir"). I might also single out here her readings of *Tender Comrade*, *The Locket*, and *Hiroshima, mon amour* and her sensitivity to formal permutations, e.g., her caveat that "analysis of a film can benefit from remarking not only on the presence of a given flashback but the absence of others, not only on what information is presented in a flashback, but what is left out" (43), or her recognition that "The retrospective frame of the flashback biography seems to suggest a more critical stance than biographies told in a linear order, typical of rise-to-fame narrative" (112).

But I have problems with the organization of *Flashbacks in Film*. Turim's favored method is to proceed via a string of readings (ranging in length from one paragraph to several pages) of films from the time period or genre in question. Often her readings are interesting, but she offers *so many* that the end result is numbing, indeed tedious. Moreover, her generalizations tend to get lost, overwhelmed by the plethora of examples, and undermined by the unique details of each film.

Organization is also weak in terms of the book's general layout. The table of contents offers only broad chapter headings (not very useful for reference) but the reader finds that each chapter is divided into an average of nine sections. Unfortunately these headings do not seem to have been chosen with much attention to logical hierarchy, a flaw which tends to confuse the reader and blunt the efficacy of Turim's argumentation.[2]

Furthermore, though I realize that here my own preference may not be shared by all readers, I miss in this study a sustained, formal, narratological analysis of the technique. Turim is certainly cognizant of the issues of narrative theory and throughout her study one finds little remarks on how a flashback is focalized or on the way it manipulates what Roland Barthes calls the "hermeneutic code." But because her narrative theory is diffused throughout the chronological study it never gets the attention I think it deserves. She never offers a theory of filmic narration (the questions of who is offering these flashbacks); she doesn't distinguish between various ways of embedding flashbacks; she doesn't analyze how cinematic narration handles temporal anachronies in general. Such a grounding would have helped clarify the permuta-

tions of the different national schools and genres under consideration.[3]

Turim traces two major themes throughout her study, the flashback's relation to "Memory" and its handling of "History." While I have only admiration for her handling of the former, I confess to some misgivings about her treatment of the latter. Is it really possible for a fiction film to use a character-motivated flashback to engage History in anything but a subjective fashion? Are the Hollywood films that she criticizes the only—or the best—examples of Hollywood's handling of History? What about documentaries or pseudo-documentaries where flashbacks might be offered by a more "objective" authorial voice? How does the handling of History by flashback films compare with the handling of History by films narrated chronologically? Turim's presumably Marxist-oriented litmus test for the use of flashbacks raises more questions than it answers.

Turim's study is rich, but the issue of flashbacks in film is not yet exhausted. SARAH KOZLOFF

Notes

1. See, for instance, David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); Mary Ann Doane, *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), and Sarah Kozloff, *Invisible Storytellers: Voice-Over Narration in American Fiction Film* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
2. For example, in chapter 2 one finds a heading, "Functions of Early Flashbacks" which offers a table specifying seven functions (33). Yet the next six headings in the chapter each focus on a specific function, some of which repeat those on the earlier table, some of which—confusingly—are new to the reader. Shouldn't all of the specific functions have been grouped together as *subdivisions* of the general topic "Functions of Early Flashbacks"? Similarly, the last four sections of chapter 5 all deal with different facets of film noir; they could have been grouped as sub-headings of a general section, "Flashbacks and Film Noir."
3. The table of functions presented on page 33 sorely needs to clarify such issues as who motivates the flashbacks and how they operate within the film's discourse.

The Film Criticism of Vernon Young

Edited and with a foreword by Bert Cardullo. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990.

Costumed in the rhetoric of *Hudson Review*, Vernon Young is a Zelig—sometimes English (born London), sometimes pedantic (Harvard Graduate School), alternatively Southwest Lawrentian (a longtime resident of Arizona and New Mexico) and cosmopolite (Italy, Stockholm). Young is defiantly himself and also Samuel Johnson, a veritable mountain of tics.

The present volume picks up from *On Film*, 1970, until Young's death in 1986. It also includes early material, 1960 backward to 1949. Skipping the one decade, the 35-year span coincidentally traces many personal viewing histories: options spelled in terms of distribution, festivals, and world travel. Early Young, the one with Bijou choices, walks a precarious line, exacting stern standards on film, reluctantly finding the best work in unlikely venues. "Distinctions are not often enough made between films in which violence is injected for its own sake and those in which it is the inescapable ingredient of a given coil of action. Nor are they made between films where a desirable (i.e., socially progressive?) subject matter is incompetently rendered and others where a predominantly decivilized atmosphere is the only truthful possibility and is converted according to the laws and motions of its kind." (39) In such passages, Young also describes himself. Like Manny Farber (Young likes Farber and quotes him now and again), he *merits* a movie whose overriding aesthetic reifies behavior consistent with its self-created world. Characteristically, such a find turns out to be a thriller, "a film slight of content yet rich of texture." Unlike Farber, Young regularly wishes for more, despairing over adaptations that betray Henry James or Graham Green, Tolstoy or Walter Van Tilburg Clark.

The reader can put different faces on this. Art critic, book reviewer, literary pundit, Young wishes that movies would nudge people toward confronting matters of high moment that popular culture avoids like the plague. Alternatively, he's a snob. He just doesn't like the people in American films

tions of the different national schools and genres under consideration.[3]

Turim traces two major themes throughout her study, the flashback's relation to "Memory" and its handling of "History." While I have only admiration for her handling of the former, I confess to some misgivings about her treatment of the latter. Is it really possible for a fiction film to use a character-motivated flashback to engage History in anything but a subjective fashion? Are the Hollywood films that she criticizes the only—or the best—examples of Hollywood's handling of History? What about documentaries or pseudo-documentaries where flashbacks might be offered by a more "objective" authorial voice? How does the handling of History by flashback films compare with the handling of History by films narrated chronologically? Turim's presumably Marxist-oriented litmus test for the use of flashbacks raises more questions than it answers.

Turim's study is rich, but the issue of flashbacks in film is not yet exhausted. SARAH KOZLOFF

Notes

1. See, for instance, David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); Mary Ann Doane, *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), and Sarah Kozloff, *Invisible Storytellers: Voice-Over Narration in American Fiction Film* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
2. For example, in chapter 2 one finds a heading, "Functions of Early Flashbacks" which offers a table specifying seven functions (33). Yet the next six headings in the chapter each focus on a specific function, some of which repeat those on the earlier table, some of which—confusingly—are new to the reader. Shouldn't all of the specific functions have been grouped together as *subdivisions* of the general topic "Functions of Early Flashbacks"? Similarly, the last four sections of chapter 5 all deal with different facets of film noir; they could have been grouped as sub-headings of a general section, "Flashbacks and Film Noir."
3. The table of functions presented on page 33 sorely needs to clarify such issues as who motivates the flashbacks and how they operate within the film's discourse.

The Film Criticism of Vernon Young

Edited and with a foreword by Bert Cardullo. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990.

Costumed in the rhetoric of *Hudson Review*, Vernon Young is a Zelig—sometimes English (born London), sometimes pedantic (Harvard Graduate School), alternatively Southwest Lawrentian (a longtime resident of Arizona and New Mexico) and cosmopolite (Italy, Stockholm). Young is defiantly himself and also Samuel Johnson, a veritable mountain of tics.

The present volume picks up from *On Film*, 1970, until Young's death in 1986. It also includes early material, 1960 backward to 1949. Skipping the one decade, the 35-year span coincidentally traces many personal viewing histories: options spelled in terms of distribution, festivals, and world travel. Early Young, the one with Bijou choices, walks a precarious line, exacting stern standards on film, reluctantly finding the best work in unlikely venues. "Distinctions are not often enough made between films in which violence is injected for its own sake and those in which it is the inescapable ingredient of a given coil of action. Nor are they made between films where a desirable (i.e., socially progressive?) subject matter is incompetently rendered and others where a predominantly decivilized atmosphere is the only truthful possibility and is converted according to the laws and motions of its kind." (39) In such passages, Young also describes himself. Like Manny Farber (Young likes Farber and quotes him now and again), he *merits* a movie whose overriding aesthetic reifies behavior consistent with its self-created world. Characteristically, such a find turns out to be a thriller, "a film slight of content yet rich of texture." Unlike Farber, Young regularly wishes for more, despairing over adaptations that betray Henry James or Graham Green, Tolstoy or Walter Van Tilburg Clark.

The reader can put different faces on this. Art critic, book reviewer, literary pundit, Young wishes that movies would nudge people toward confronting matters of high moment that popular culture avoids like the plague. Alternatively, he's a snob. He just doesn't like the people in American films

that capture his attention. "Human values are restricted to the crude virtues of trigger courage and honor among thieves—fidelity unto death, even to a heel—the henchman's code. This stoic morality is becoming monotonous but one has to admit its consonance with the nature of social man in these benighted decades. With this unflattering view, at any rate, Hollywood's movies have been earnestly operating and from time to time have raised sour candor to the level of art." (16) Carried to specifics, Young's capacities for rudeness can rival John Simon's. "I am constitutionally allergic to Barbra Streisand. I find Liza Minnelli as repulsive and she can't even sing!" (201)

In early years, Young may affect the feckless memory of a writer to the *Times* (easier now to criticize with all our press sheets and desktop indexes). " . . . Nicholas Ray and a genius with the camera, whose identity has escaped me. . . ." He misdescribes the wedding scene in *Greed*. *The Battle of San Pietro*, a "montage of Hell," testifies "to John Huston's physical courage, . . . to his editing skill," qualities better pinned on combat cameramen and Signal Corps editors. He denigrates *High Noon*'s ending without recognizing either its McCarthy-era ambiance or *The Virginian*, whence it came and where it returned. Indeed, the book's Western essay is condescending, ending on a Daffy Duck and conjecturing a genre piece by Jean Cocteau. (Jean Marais in rawhide?)

Young is fascinated by camera angles, editing decisions, and point of view. He invents his own language: transitional caesura, dissolve through parallel compositional structures, deployable view, the witness point. He reads Eisenstein, *Sight and Sound*, and *Film Quarterly* (to which he occasionally contributed). His essay on Hans Richter centers nonobjective film (which he once encapsulates as the dissolution and reassembly of structure) into a context of Cubism and of post-Cubist abstraction with marvelous precision. It's a shame a subject so dear to his heart, the nexus of painting and cinema, held little attention otherwise. Small art-inflected shorts inspirited him, fostering those darting, enthusiastic perceptions that mark the best Young. He wrote keenly about what he liked.

Indeed, Young tries at times to worry out like moments in drama; he lusts for "tone" like an overbearing vocal coach. Sometimes tone signifies concreteness, density of detail, as in a David Lean Dickens. Sjöberg's recomposing of *Miss Julie*, "in a different key as it were, . . . is substance and cause and it is texture." Young's pleasures are various and include early Bergman and Fellini, *Fat City*, *The Friends of Eddie Coyle*. He skewers pretentiousness in Hitchcock and Ford. He's strong for Werner Herzog, Jan Troell, and the Kubrick of *Barry Lyndon*. He can bristle and shine. Brando's delivery in *On the Waterfront* "seems as refreshing as anything heard in this direction since Clifford Odets made Chekhov safe for the Bronx." "Sound, which is time, is always extraneous to *Umberto D.*" "I am incredulous when I find a practicing critic who entertains the delusion that there is any necessary connection between talent and character, or between talent and sustained intellectual perception."

In Young's litany, two thrusts, like cattle prods, trigger predictable responses, Pavlovian banes of independent criticism. His vision of left politics supposes a regular danger of didacticism, particularly as ideology falsifies dramatic resolution the better to tidy up. As time passes, Young's suspicions seem increasingly to precede his actual viewing practices. The other grey imminence is dirty talk. "Sewer-mouthed Popeye Doyle" soon loses Young's sympathy. Gielgud's *Providence* monologues are "not that all endearing when asked to murmur copious, wormy lines about his bowels and his kidneys. . . ."

In *The Serpent's Egg* "an impotent Negro copulating with a German whore . . . [constitutes] final evidence of Bergman's coarseness, his artistic bankruptcy, his sophomoric sense of sin. . . ." Young finds greater personal comfort among secondary sources and genteel euphemisms. Films by Visconti and Reichenbach remind him of Napoleon on Tallyrand, "a piece of dung in a silk stocking." "Within five years, American actors, already the world's worst speakers of their own langauge, will need no vocabulary save a half-dozen words that define the excretory and copulative functions."

Finally, reading Vernon Young invites happy surprise at the risk of choler. Held to its best, he wants film criticism to marry marketplace, poetry, Matthew Arnold's notions of intention, and an educated man's cultural baggage. Today the posture seems charmingly old-fashioned, like *The Baker's Wife*, but no less admirable for that. Sad to say, the reconciliations Young pursues seem effected, in last analysis, by a prose style alone, and

one that proves to be vulnerable to those very elements its author ponders. JOHN FELL

Andrew, Dudley. *André Bazin*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990. $37.50 cloth; $16.00 paper. Andrew has added a new preface to this reissue of his 1978 book, and an appendix, "André Bazin from 1945 to 1950: The Time of Struggle and Consecration" by Jean-Charles Tacchella, an intimate colleague of Bazin's, completes the volume. It fascinates me that Bazin's two volumes *What Is Cinema?* continue to sell 2500 copies a year between them—a durability unequalled among film critics, as far as I know. E. C.

Clagett, Thomas D. *William Friedkin: Films of Aberration, Obsession and Reality*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1990. $35. Newsy, interview-rich overview of the director's career. If Friedkin seems somewhat irrelevant now, Clagett makes a case for the "visceral" *French Connection-Exorcist-Sorcerer* period as his subject's most sustained period, esthetically. DON WILLIS

MacKinnon, Kenneth. *Misogyny in the Movies: The De Palma Question*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990. $35.00. Is Brain De Palma a bad or a good object? Kenneth MacKinnon, a British critic and film teacher who is well versed in feminist film theory and criticism, argues that De Palma has had a bad rap from the feminist critics who call him misogynist. De Palma is not a misogynist, MacKinnon argues; his films address and critique misogyny much more than they are misogyny. The case against De Palma is not proven by his critics. MacKinnon argues cogently against knee-jerk condemnations of films and genres which deploy sex and violence. But although his defense of De Palma is both erudite and thoughtful, there is something far too reactive about the book. MacKinnon's energies could have been much better spent in expanding his lengthy discussions of the genres of horror and pornography—the genres for which De Palma has the most affinity—to take on the cultural problems and contradictions that interest him in the work of De Palma in a much more appropriate and expansive format than permitted here. There are many more important issues than whether to blame or celebrate work of this particular director. LINDA WILLIAMS

Maland, Charles J. *Chaplin and American Culture: The Evolution of a Star Image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990. $16.95 paper. Reissue of the 1989 work.

Schneider, Steve. *That's All Folks! The Art of Warner Bros. Animation*. New York: Henry Holt and Co. 1990. Reissue of the 1988 edition. $19.95

History

Screening the Holocaust

By Ilan Avisar. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.

This excellent addition to film literature affirms the motion picture's decisive role in structuring cultural values and generating conceptual frameworks. Of far greater import, moreover, this slender but densely packed volume speaks eloquently about the unprecedented and demonic Nazi attack on an innocent people, the Jews. "The fact that the target of annihilation was a people who had helped establish the foundations of western civilization and had continually made significant contributions to its development ought to startle every sensitive mind." (90-91)

However, as this perceptive analysis of Holocaust films demonstrates by delving behind surface images and cinematic representations, even the very best-intentioned Holocaust films are diverted from the uncredible realities of the camps and are diminished by political, cultural, and economic issues. In addition, these films are beset by problems evolving from cinematic conventions.

Screening the Holocaust incisively focuses these issues in chapters discussing the use of cinematic documentation, narrative conventions, and stylistic techniques, as they were influenced by contemporary comprehension of Nazi crimes. Those chapters discuss the formidable dilemma that conventional entertainment formats and realistic images encounter in speaking the unspeakable. In fact, one of the book's great values is the clarity with which it describes how cinema's surface realism and conventional techniques undermine comprehension of Hitler's evil.

Avisar effectively describes the pitfalls of narrative, how plot complications and melodramatic interests trivialize the unprecedented tragedy of life and death in Auschwitz and other camps. From the cover illustration (*The Last Stop*) depicting a camp inmate, incongruous with her heavy lipstick, to *The Pawnbroker's* trivialization of Auschwitz by comparing it to Harlem, Avisar firmly establishes the insufficiency of fiction to represent facts which surpass one's most perverse fantasy. This is not to say that the book dismisses all Holocaust films as

one that proves to be vulnerable to those very elements its author ponders. JOHN FELL

Andrew, Dudley. *André Bazin*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990. $37.50 cloth; $16.00 paper. Andrew has added a new preface to this reissue of his 1978 book, and an appendix, "André Bazin from 1945 to 1950: The Time of Struggle and Consecration" by Jean-Charles Tacchella, an intimate colleague of Bazin's, completes the volume. It fascinates me that Bazin's two volumes *What Is Cinema?* continue to sell 2500 copies a year between them—a durability unequalled among film critics, as far as I know. E. C.

Clagett, Thomas D. *William Friedkin: Films of Aberration, Obsession and Reality*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1990. $35. Newsy, interview-rich overview of the director's career. If Friedkin seems somewhat irrelevant now, Clagett makes a case for the "visceral" *French Connection-Exorcist-Sorcerer* period as his subject's most sustained period, esthetically. DON WILLIS

MacKinnon, Kenneth. *Misogyny in the Movies: The De Palma Question*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990. $35.00. Is Brain De Palma a bad or a good object? Kenneth MacKinnon, a British critic and film teacher who is well versed in feminist film theory and criticism, argues that De Palma has had a bad rap from the feminist critics who call him misogynist. De Palma is not a misogynist, MacKinnon argues; his films address and critique misogyny much more than they are misogyny. The case against De Palma is not proven by his critics. MacKinnon argues cogently against knee-jerk condemnations of films and genres which deploy sex and violence. But although his defense of De Palma is both erudite and thoughtful, there is something far too reactive about the book. MacKinnon's energies could have been much better spent in expanding his lengthy discussions of the genres of horror and pornography—the genres for which De Palma has the most affinity—to take on the cultural problems and contradictions that interest him in the work of De Palma in a much more appropriate and expansive format than permitted here. There are many more important issues than whether to blame or celebrate work of this particular director. LINDA WILLIAMS

Maland, Charles J. *Chaplin and American Culture: The Evolution of a Star Image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990. $16.95 paper. Reissue of the 1989 work.

Schneider, Steve. *That's All Folks! The Art of Warner Bros. Animation*. New York: Henry Holt and Co. 1990. Reissue of the 1988 edition. $19.95

History

Screening the Holocaust

By Ilan Avisar. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.

This excellent addition to film literature affirms the motion picture's decisive role in structuring cultural values and generating conceptual frameworks. Of far greater import, moreover, this slender but densely packed volume speaks eloquently about the unprecedented and demonic Nazi attack on an innocent people, the Jews. "The fact that the target of annihilation was a people who had helped establish the foundations of western civilization and had continually made significant contributions to its development ought to startle every sensitive mind." (90-91)

However, as this perceptive analysis of Holocaust films demonstrates by delving behind surface images and cinematic representations, even the very best-intentioned Holocaust films are diverted from the uncredible realities of the camps and are diminished by political, cultural, and economic issues. In addition, these films are beset by problems evolving from cinematic conventions.

Screening the Holocaust incisively focuses these issues in chapters discussing the use of cinematic documentation, narrative conventions, and stylistic techniques, as they were influenced by contemporary comprehension of Nazi crimes. Those chapters discuss the formidable dilemma that conventional entertainment formats and realistic images encounter in speaking the unspeakable. In fact, one of the book's great values is the clarity with which it describes how cinema's surface realism and conventional techniques undermine comprehension of Hitler's evil.

Avisar effectively describes the pitfalls of narrative, how plot complications and melodramatic interests trivialize the unprecedented tragedy of life and death in Auschwitz and other camps. From the cover illustration (*The Last Stop*) depicting a camp inmate, incongruous with her heavy lipstick, to *The Pawnbroker's* trivialization of Auschwitz by comparing it to Harlem, Avisar firmly establishes the insufficiency of fiction to represent facts which surpass one's most perverse fantasy. This is not to say that the book dismisses all Holocaust films as

one that proves to be vulnerable to those very elements its author ponders. JOHN FELL

Andrew, Dudley. *André Bazin*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990. $37.50 cloth; $16.00 paper. Andrew has added a new preface to this reissue of his 1978 book, and an appendix, "André Bazin from 1945 to 1950: The Time of Struggle and Consecration" by Jean-Charles Tacchella, an intimate colleague of Bazin's, completes the volume. It fascinates me that Bazin's two volumes *What Is Cinema?* continue to sell 2500 copies a year between them—a durability unequalled among film critics, as far as I know. E. C.

Clagett, Thomas D. *William Friedkin: Films of Aberration, Obsession and Reality*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1990. $35. Newsy, interview-rich overview of the director's career. If Friedkin seems somewhat irrelevant now, Clagett makes a case for the "visceral" *French Connection-Exorcist-Sorcerer* period as his subject's most sustained period, esthetically. DON WILLIS

MacKinnon, Kenneth. *Misogyny in the Movies: The De Palma Question*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990. $35.00. Is Brain De Palma a bad or a good object? Kenneth MacKinnon, a British critic and film teacher who is well versed in feminist film theory and criticism, argues that De Palma has had a bad rap from the feminist critics who call him misogynist. De Palma is not a misogynist, MacKinnon argues; his films address and critique misogyny much more than they are misogyny. The case against De Palma is not proven by his critics. MacKinnon argues cogently against knee-jerk condemnations of films and genres which deploy sex and violence. But although his defense of De Palma is both erudite and thoughtful, there is something far too reactive about the book. MacKinnon's energies could have been much better spent in expanding his lengthy discussions of the genres of horror and pornography—the genres for which De Palma has the most affinity—to take on the cultural problems and contradictions that interest him in the work of De Palma in a much more appropriate and expansive format than permitted here. There are many more important issues than whether to blame or celebrate work of this particular director. LINDA WILLIAMS

Maland, Charles J. *Chaplin and American Culture: The Evolution of a Star Image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990. $16.95 paper. Reissue of the 1989 work.

Schneider, Steve. *That's All Folks! The Art of Warner Bros. Animation*. New York: Henry Holt and Co. 1990. Reissue of the 1988 edition. $19.95

History

Screening the Holocaust

By Ilan Avisar. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.

This excellent addition to film literature affirms the motion picture's decisive role in structuring cultural values and generating conceptual frameworks. Of far greater import, moreover, this slender but densely packed volume speaks eloquently about the unprecedented and demonic Nazi attack on an innocent people, the Jews. "The fact that the target of annihilation was a people who had helped establish the foundations of western civilization and had continually made significant contributions to its development ought to startle every sensitive mind." (90-91)

However, as this perceptive analysis of Holocaust films demonstrates by delving behind surface images and cinematic representations, even the very best-intentioned Holocaust films are diverted from the uncredible realities of the camps and are diminished by political, cultural, and economic issues. In addition, these films are beset by problems evolving from cinematic conventions.

Screening the Holocaust incisively focuses these issues in chapters discussing the use of cinematic documentation, narrative conventions, and stylistic techniques, as they were influenced by contemporary comprehension of Nazi crimes. Those chapters discuss the formidable dilemma that conventional entertainment formats and realistic images encounter in speaking the unspeakable. In fact, one of the book's great values is the clarity with which it describes how cinema's surface realism and conventional techniques undermine comprehension of Hitler's evil.

Avisar effectively describes the pitfalls of narrative, how plot complications and melodramatic interests trivialize the unprecedented tragedy of life and death in Auschwitz and other camps. From the cover illustration (*The Last Stop*) depicting a camp inmate, incongruous with her heavy lipstick, to *The Pawnbroker's* trivialization of Auschwitz by comparing it to Harlem, Avisar firmly establishes the insufficiency of fiction to represent facts which surpass one's most perverse fantasy. This is not to say that the book dismisses all Holocaust films as

insufficient, but with great clarity and incisive analysis it depicts the struggle that realistic images and dramatic formats have in expressing the inexpressible.

Rather puzzlingly, Chaplin's *The Great Dictator,* which of course preceded general knowledge about the camps, is analyzed in a separate chapter and is valued as one of the boldest and most successful of the genre. Avisar quotes Chaplin in 1964: "Had I known of the actual horrors of the German concentration camps, I could not have made fun of the homicidal insanity of the Nazis." (148)

The chapters on cinematic representation focus, as well, on national cinemas noted for their place —valued and otherwise—in the annals of Holocaust cinema. In the main, those are the American, Czech, French, and Italian film cultures—but others are not ignored.

Avisar's descriptive ability far exceeds the norm in film literature. His graphic analysis of Resnais's *Night and Fog* almost equals the tragic impact of that remarkable film. Whether or not you have screened the films Avisar analyzes, you will think you have when you finish reading his book. That quality propels *Screening the Holocaust* to a higher plane; it becomes itself a vivid accusation against the Nazi crime and against the world which stood by during this unparalleled, maniacal attack on an innocent people.

It has been bandied about in some quarters that I am unforgiving in matters of historical and factual accuracy. Because of the brilliance of Avisar's conceptualization and the profoundly evocative images his analyses project, I forbear noting here several minor errors and recommend this book in the highest terms possible.

DAN GREENBERG

Jacques Prévert

Popular French Theater and Cinema

By Claire Blakeway. Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1990. $36.50

Claire Blakeway's subject is important if only because the relations between Prévert's theater and screen work have never been examined systematically. Yet given Prévert's screenwriting preeminence during the 1930s and 1940s, Blakeway sensibly proposes that such an examination also sheds light on larger issues of French cinema of the period, specifically, "why, in their treatment of current social issues, did the films of the 30s not follow more closely the neo-realist style which was emerging in Britain and America?" (11).

They key to this question lies for Blakeway in the trajectory of Prévert's early career, namely, his short-lived affiliation with the Surrealists followed in 1932 by his heady four-year association with the radical workers' theater company known as the Groupe Octobre. Blakeway's overarching thesis proposes that the Surrealists' opposition to realism, and their concept of revolutionary art as social criticism rather than the social-realist evocation of current problems, dovetailed with the Groupe Octobre's enthusiasm for early Russian avant-garde art and its principle of cross-fertilization of genres, and that this aesthetic-political convergence conditioned the theatrical stylization of French social cinema as embodied emblematically in Prévert's films.

Blakeway accurately perceives Prévert less as a leading Surrealist thinker and artist than as an *animateur* who injected his own brand of nonconformist vitality into the movement. She correctly construes *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*, *Drôle de Drame*, and *Les Enfants du paradis* as, at least in part, expressions of Surrealist convictions on art. And she demonstrates the utility of examining the criminal characters in *Jenny* and *Le Quai des Brumes* as remnants of Prévert's Surrealist involvement. Anglo-American readers will find Blakeway's exposition of Prévert's Groupe Octobre activities valuable, since English-language literature on this subject is scant and since Prévert was the Groupe's galvanizer. Blakeway demonstrates convincingly that for all the attention paid in the Groupe's songs, sketches, and pantomimes to such topical issues as poverty, unemployment, and workers' exploitation, specific commentary on political issues was progressively impeded by Prévert's penchant for antirealist, Surreal touches of farce, caricature, and parody—traits that also characterize much of his film writing, especially his collaborations with Pierre Prévert (*L'Affaire est dans le sac*) and Jean Renoir (*Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*). Indeed, Blakeway observes incisively that Prévert found in Renoir "a director who was equally reluctant to limit himself to pat political doctrines" (89). In her

insufficient, but with great clarity and incisive analysis it depicts the struggle that realistic images and dramatic formats have in expressing the inexpressible.

Rather puzzlingly, Chaplin's *The Great Dictator,* which of course preceded general knowledge about the camps, is analyzed in a separate chapter and is valued as one of the boldest and most successful of the genre. Avisar quotes Chaplin in 1964: "Had I known of the actual horrors of the German concentration camps, I could not have made fun of the homicidal insanity of the Nazis." (148)

The chapters on cinematic representation focus, as well, on national cinemas noted for their place —valued and otherwise—in the annals of Holocaust cinema. In the main, those are the American, Czech, French, and Italian film cultures—but others are not ignored.

Avisar's descriptive ability far exceeds the norm in film literature. His graphic analysis of Resnais's *Night and Fog* almost equals the tragic impact of that remarkable film. Whether or not you have screened the films Avisar analyzes, you will think you have when you finish reading his book. That quality propels *Screening the Holocaust* to a higher plane; it becomes itself a vivid accusation against the Nazi crime and against the world which stood by during this unparalleled, maniacal attack on an innocent people.

It has been bandied about in some quarters that I am unforgiving in matters of historical and factual accuracy. Because of the brilliance of Avisar's conceptualization and the profoundly evocative images his analyses project, I forbear noting here several minor errors and recommend this book in the highest terms possible.

DAN GREENBERG

Jacques Prévert

Popular French Theater and Cinema

By Claire Blakeway. Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1990. $36.50

Claire Blakeway's subject is important if only because the relations between Prévert's theater and screen work have never been examined systematically. Yet given Prévert's screenwriting preeminence during the 1930s and 1940s, Blakeway sensibly proposes that such an examination also sheds light on larger issues of French cinema of the period, specifically, "why, in their treatment of current social issues, did the films of the 30s not follow more closely the neo-realist style which was emerging in Britain and America?" (11).

They key to this question lies for Blakeway in the trajectory of Prévert's early career, namely, his short-lived affiliation with the Surrealists followed in 1932 by his heady four-year association with the radical workers' theater company known as the Groupe Octobre. Blakeway's overarching thesis proposes that the Surrealists' opposition to realism, and their concept of revolutionary art as social criticism rather than the social-realist evocation of current problems, dovetailed with the Groupe Octobre's enthusiasm for early Russian avant-garde art and its principle of cross-fertilization of genres, and that this aesthetic-political convergence conditioned the theatrical stylization of French social cinema as embodied emblematically in Prévert's films.

Blakeway accurately perceives Prévert less as a leading Surrealist thinker and artist than as an *animateur* who injected his own brand of nonconformist vitality into the movement. She correctly construes *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*, *Drôle de Drame*, and *Les Enfants du paradis* as, at least in part, expressions of Surrealist convictions on art. And she demonstrates the utility of examining the criminal characters in *Jenny* and *Le Quai des Brumes* as remnants of Prévert's Surrealist involvement. Anglo-American readers will find Blakeway's exposition of Prévert's Groupe Octobre activities valuable, since English-language literature on this subject is scant and since Prévert was the Groupe's galvanizer. Blakeway demonstrates convincingly that for all the attention paid in the Groupe's songs, sketches, and pantomimes to such topical issues as poverty, unemployment, and workers' exploitation, specific commentary on political issues was progressively impeded by Prévert's penchant for antirealist, Surreal touches of farce, caricature, and parody—traits that also characterize much of his film writing, especially his collaborations with Pierre Prévert (*L'Affaire est dans le sac*) and Jean Renoir (*Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*). Indeed, Blakeway observes incisively that Prévert found in Renoir "a director who was equally reluctant to limit himself to pat political doctrines" (89). In her

best chapter, devoted to *Drôle de Drame*, Blakeway contends that for Carné and Prévert "social realism was not, in their estimation, a radical enough style for left-wing art. On the evidence of their work, they conceived of true propaganda art as a social critique conveyed through popular style and themes" (140).

Although Blakeway's overall thesis is cogently presented, it often leads to incomplete and skewed readings of films. Falling repeatedly into a *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* trap, Blakeway tends to reduce all filmic elements to either Surrealist or Groupe Octobre inspiration. Given Carné's debt to *Kammerspielfilm* and German Expressionism, Blakeway surely overstates her case, for example, in viewing Surrealism as "fundamental" to *Le Quai des Brumes* and *Le Jour se lève* (114 ff). With respect to *Les Enfants du paradis*, Blakeway posits that the film's themes of love, criminality, dream's primacy over the conscious world, Lacenaire's nonconformity, and the blurring of conventional dramatic genres are all rooted in Surrealism. While such a proposition makes some sense, its interpretive potential is vitiated by the fact that Blakeway's use of it does not add to a deeper understanding of the film. Her uninspired reading of *Les Enfants du paradis* results in significant measure, I believe, from Blakeway's collapsing the categories Romanticism and Surrealism and from her inattention to post-Romantic, Symbolist currents in *Les Enfants du paradis*, especially those associated with the character played by Jean-Louis Barrault.

More fundamentally, Blakeway neither defines nor problematizes her use of the term "popular." While the book makes ample reference to the Popular Front, issues of populism and popularity in the arts are not addressed. Additionally, Blakeway neglects two components of Prévert's oeuvre that are certainly pertinent to her subject: The film *Les Portes de la nuit* (1946) and Prévert's teleplays from the 1950s and 1960s. *Les Portes de la nuit* marked Prévert's attempt to represent contemporary French social realities more directly than in any of his prior films; the dilution of that aim through his sustained weddedness to depicting dreamworlds lends support to Blakeway's overall thesis, and it is thus unfortunate that she does not treat this last and least well known of the major Carné-Prévert efforts. *Les Portes de la nuit* is also the film that could arguably shed most light on Blakeway's initial question (one that ultimately vanishes from the study) concerning France's resistance to "the neo-realist style" (11). Likewise, treatment of the teleplays, many of them fantasies aimed ostensibly at children, would have enriched an understanding of Prévert's lifelong commitment to the *populaire*, a commitment evinced as early as the 1920s, when he scorned men like Gance and L'Herbier who sought to elevate motion pictures to so-called art, and extending into the era of television, a mass entertainment medium with which Prévert felt immediately and exceedingly comfortable.

Handsomely illustrated and typeset, the book contains some factual errors: for example, "Les feuilles mortes" was originally written for Marlene Dietrich not for Yves Montand (178). The book also manifests constant confusion between the notions of *mise en scène* and frame composition. But this monograph's most serious deficiency perhaps lies in Blakeway's persistent conflation of Prévert's vision with Carné's; one cannot speak of "Carné and Prévert's themes" (150) without considerable qualification. By ignoring the specificity of the dialectic between Carné and Prévert, Blakeway readily perpetuates such standard bromides as "there are weaknesses in Carné and Prévert's portrayal of love" (117).

Blakeway's well-intentioned book points to a need for more probing investigation of the relations between French society and cinema and of the centrality of Jacques Prévert in twentieth-century French popular culture. EDWARD BARON TURK

Cahiers du cinéma, 1969-1972
The Politics of Representation

Edited by Nick Browne. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990. $30.00

Twenty years ago, shortly after the 1968 "movement of May," French writing on the cinema underwent a radical transformation, largely through the politically engaged film criticism of *Cahiers du cinéma*. This, the third (and perhaps best) volume in the *Cahiers du cinéma* translation series, dramatizes that transformation in a selection of two dozen texts, most of them previously untranslated in English, drawn from the period of March 1969 to December 1971. Editor Nick Browne, how-

best chapter, devoted to *Drôle de Drame*, Blakeway contends that for Carné and Prévert "social realism was not, in their estimation, a radical enough style for left-wing art. On the evidence of their work, they conceived of true propaganda art as a social critique conveyed through popular style and themes" (140).

Although Blakeway's overall thesis is cogently presented, it often leads to incomplete and skewed readings of films. Falling repeatedly into a *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* trap, Blakeway tends to reduce all filmic elements to either Surrealist or Groupe Octobre inspiration. Given Carné's debt to *Kammerspielfilm* and German Expressionism, Blakeway surely overstates her case, for example, in viewing Surrealism as "fundamental" to *Le Quai des Brumes* and *Le Jour se lève* (114 ff). With respect to *Les Enfants du paradis*, Blakeway posits that the film's themes of love, criminality, dream's primacy over the conscious world, Lacenaire's nonconformity, and the blurring of conventional dramatic genres are all rooted in Surrealism. While such a proposition makes some sense, its interpretive potential is vitiated by the fact that Blakeway's use of it does not add to a deeper understanding of the film. Her uninspired reading of *Les Enfants du paradis* results in significant measure, I believe, from Blakeway's collapsing the categories Romanticism and Surrealism and from her inattention to post-Romantic, Symbolist currents in *Les Enfants du paradis*, especially those associated with the character played by Jean-Louis Barrault.

More fundamentally, Blakeway neither defines nor problematizes her use of the term "popular." While the book makes ample reference to the Popular Front, issues of populism and popularity in the arts are not addressed. Additionally, Blakeway neglects two components of Prévert's oeuvre that are certainly pertinent to her subject: The film *Les Portes de la nuit* (1946) and Prévert's teleplays from the 1950s and 1960s. *Les Portes de la nuit* marked Prévert's attempt to represent contemporary French social realities more directly than in any of his prior films; the dilution of that aim through his sustained weddedness to depicting dreamworlds lends support to Blakeway's overall thesis, and it is thus unfortunate that she does not treat this last and least well known of the major Carné-Prévert efforts. *Les Portes de la nuit* is also the film that could arguably shed most light on Blakeway's initial question (one that ultimately vanishes from the study) concerning France's resistance to "the neo-realist style" (11). Likewise, treatment of the teleplays, many of them fantasies aimed ostensibly at children, would have enriched an understanding of Prévert's lifelong commitment to the *populaire*, a commitment evinced as early as the 1920s, when he scorned men like Gance and L'Herbier who sought to elevate motion pictures to so-called art, and extending into the era of television, a mass entertainment medium with which Prévert felt immediately and exceedingly comfortable.

Handsomely illustrated and typeset, the book contains some factual errors: for example, "Les feuilles mortes" was originally written for Marlene Dietrich not for Yves Montand (178). The book also manifests constant confusion between the notions of *mise en scène* and frame composition. But this monograph's most serious deficiency perhaps lies in Blakeway's persistent conflation of Prévert's vision with Carné's; one cannot speak of "Carné and Prévert's themes" (150) without considerable qualification. By ignoring the specificity of the dialectic between Carné and Prévert, Blakeway readily perpetuates such standard bromides as "there are weaknesses in Carné and Prévert's portrayal of love" (117).

Blakeway's well-intentioned book points to a need for more probing investigation of the relations between French society and cinema and of the centrality of Jacques Prévert in twentieth-century French popular culture. EDWARD BARON TURK

Cahiers du cinéma, 1969-1972
The Politics of Representation

Edited by Nick Browne. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990. $30.00

Twenty years ago, shortly after the 1968 "movement of May," French writing on the cinema underwent a radical transformation, largely through the politically engaged film criticism of *Cahiers du cinéma*. This, the third (and perhaps best) volume in the *Cahiers du cinéma* translation series, dramatizes that transformation in a selection of two dozen texts, most of them previously untranslated in English, drawn from the period of March 1969 to December 1971. Editor Nick Browne, how-

ever, does much more than restage the theoretical intervention of Jacques Aumont, Pascal Bonitzer, Jean-Louis Comolli, Serge Daney, Jean Narboni, Jean-Pierre Oudart, and others. To paraphrase the writers themselves, in their own analysis of *La Vie est à nous* (1936), this volume addresses at least two questions about the *Cahiers* collective project: how was that project situated in the social and historical context of the period, and how does its militancy speak to us now? For not only do these texts offer much of the material necessary for reconstructing the intellectual dynamic of that exciting period, but they establish *Cahiers*' contribution to the formation of contemporary film theory as well as its continuing viability.

Browne's 20-page introduction to the volume deftly maps out some of the key nodal points of the *Cahiers* project's trajectory. Propelled by the political events of May 1968, the *Cahiers* writers helped to organize and then participated in the "Estates General of Cinema" debates, which, by June, concluded in a program to restructure the French film industry (including television), especially in terms of putting in place an oppositional sphere of production and distribution. When the restabilization of the De Gaulle regime kept this program from being enacted, as Sylvia Harvey argues in *May '68 and Film Culture* (BFI 1978), *Cahiers* shifted its efforts to create a new and transformed social space from one practice of film writing to another: film criticism (with television now essentially excluded). All this forced the journal to break with its own critical and theoretical past, specifically the "idealist" tradition of André Bazin, as the *Cahiers* writers sought to define their collective project in terms of cultural materialism by forging a link—through the translation of Sergei Eisenstein's writings (overseen by Bernard Eisenschitz)—to the revolutionary Russian cultural activitiy of the 1920s. By November 1969, this break produced a change in ownership, with Jacques Doniol-Valcroze assuming sole legal responsibility for the journal, as Comolli and Narboni took over direction of the editorial board. At the same time, *Cahiers* clarified its position vis-à-vis *Cinéthique*, a new radical film journal which, while sharing *Cahiers*' general political stance, rejected the institution of the commercial cinema outright and instead advocated an alternative avant-garde cinema that was rigorously self-reflexive. Within another year, however, in response to a broadside attack by *Positif* on what the rival film journal called the wayward disciplines of Christian Metz and semiotics, *Cahiers* joined in alliance with *Cinéthique* and the literary journal *Tel Quel* to reassert the centrality of a Marxist discourse in the field of film. During this period, all three journals accepted a *rapprochement* with the French Communist Party until, in 1971, they broke with the Party's antagonistic attitude toward the Chinese Cultural Revolution—a position carefully explained in the *Cahiers* editorial or self-critique (December 1971), which Browne purposely chooses to conclude this volume. Thereafter, the *Cahiers* project turned, in Harvey's words, toward "the development of a new revolutionary party in France, the forging of closer links with the French working class, a careful study of the forms of popular culture, and the gradual infiltration of cultural centers throughout the country . . . "—occasioning further debates which will be dramatized in the next volume of the *Cahiers du cinéma* translation series.

Cahiers' theoretical position during this period is most fully articulated in "Cinema/Ideology/Criticism" (October 1969), then reiterated in "Cinema/Ideology/Politics" (October 1971), both of which define the parameters of an emerging "scientific criticism." Such a position, Comolli and Narboni write, demands an "awareness of [one's] own historical and social situation, [as well as] a rigorous analysis of the proposed field of study, the conditions which make the work necessary and those which make it possible, and the special function it intends to fill." A basic premise of their analysis, for instance, is that film is an ideological product as well as a material product or commodity within a capitalist system of economic relations—which means that its principal effect is to "reproduce reality" or reality (in terms of social relations) as constituted by the dominant ideology. While the *Cahiers* writers assign film-makers the task of disturbing or even disrupting the connection between cinema and its ideological function, they themselves take on the parallel task, as film critics, of trying to change the ideology which conditions the cinema's production and reception. Here the most significant contribution of their work, Browne argues, is a thoroughly worked out theory and critique of cinematic representation. In a series of essays—see, for instance, Oudart's "Cinema and Suture" and "The Reality Effect," Narboni's "Off-screen

Space," and Comolli's "Technique and Ideology [Depth of Field]"—the *Cahiers* writers systematically analyze how the filmic image, as a textual construction, works to inscribe a certain "impression of reality," not only in the late twentieth century but throughout cinema history. More precisely, this involves a sustained inquiry into a double set of relations, between image and referent/between image and spectator, considered in the context of ideological determination. In other words, their inquiry is framed within not only the master discourse of Marx (through Althusser) but also within that of Freud (through Lacan) or, to quote Browne again: "historical materialism, whose 'scene' is history and economics; and psychoanalysis, the discourse of the 'other scene' of the subject, the unconscious." In retrospect, then, through its interrogation of such concepts as the subject and representation (concepts later to be interrogated elsewhere along the axis of difference according to gender and ethnicity), the *Cahiers* project constitutes a crucial historical moment—the introduction of the privileged themes of post-structuralism into the field of film.

As a topographical map of the *Cahiers* project, "Cinema/Ideology/Criticism" also lays out a specific schema of categories for analyzing whether or not a film interrogates or disrupts the cinema's "impression of reality" and how. With some justification, Browne reformulates *Cahiers*' seven categories of film into three—the classic, the modernist, and the militant—according to the direction of the writers' own critical work on individual film texts. The collective analysis of Ford's *Young Mr. Lincoln* (ostensibly not reprinted here because already widely available) perhaps best illustrates the *Cahiers* critique of classic American cinema, especially in its mobilization of the causal concept of "structuring absences"; but others no less significant, if less familiar, are translated here—on Sternberg's *Morocco* (1930) and Cukor's *Sylvia Scarlett* (1934). And each discloses a fundamental model of textual economy for the American cinema in which, as Browne puts it, "two paradigmatic scenes—the sexual and the political—[are reciprocally articulated] onto each other, within a determinate social setting . . . " The *Cahiers* critique of the contemporary modernist cinema, as a "deficient discourse," covers a range of films from those of Bresson to Buñuel; but it is probably best exemplified by the analysis of Visconti's *Death in Venice* (1971), a film which, while destabilizing the conventional distinctions between the fictive and the real, between image and referent, ends up reinscribing the same ideological effects. In its critique of militant cinema, interestingly enough, *Cahiers* turns not to the Soviet films of the 1920s but to *La Vie est à nous* for a model of praxis, especially for the way the French film seems to have thought through the question of audience, in the specific historical context of 1936, and to have accounted for its mode of address by its own dialectical construction. In fact, the *Cahiers* critics read Kozintsev and Trauberg's *The New Babylon* (1929), by contrast, as an inappropriate model of the militant film, just as they read Jancsó's *The Confrontation* (1970) and Costa-Gavras's *The Confession* (1970), in different ways, as less "political" or "militant" ultimately than Straub's *Othon* (1970) which at least demonstrates how important, to quote Browne once more, "work on the signifier [can be] as political action and ideological deconstruction."

If this selection of translated essays recovers much of the complex internal and external history of *Cahiers*, from 1968 to 1972, it also forces us to reconsider the historical reception of the *Cahiers* project in England and the United States. That reception was mediated, of course, by the British film journal, *Screen*, which underwent its own theoretical break and transformation in 1971, only partly in response to what was happening in France. The Cahiers essays which *Screen* circulated in translation, however, were not all that extensive—the forestalled plan for restructuring the cinema industry (puzzlingly absent from this volume), the initial formulation of a critical position, the critique of *Young Mr. Lincoln*, the conceptualization of *suture*—even with the addition of fragments from "Technique and Ideology" published later elsewhere. Along with the *Screen* writers' own work, which clearly engaged with a much broader range of *Cahiers* materials, these few texts then filtered into and altered American film theory and criticism, both in and out of the academy. Although obviously influential, the *Cahiers* project was partially subsumed in the parallel *Screen* project, and perhaps even blunted. While both helped transform our conception of the classic American film text—see, for instance, Browne's own reading of another 1939 Ford film, *Stagecoach* (*Film Quarterly*, 1977)—the *Cahiers* project also was deflected by other

French or French-inflected interventions that were much less politically engaged—e.g., Noël Burch's "Propositions" (*Afterimage*, 1974), Daniel Dayan's "The Tutor-Code of Classical Cinema" (*Film Quarterly*, 1974), and especially Jean-Louis Baudry's "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus" (*Film Quarterly*, 1974–75). Would the historical trajectory of our own (that is, American) film theory and criticism have been different if *Cahiers* texts such as the critique of *La Vie est à nous* and *Morocco* (especially in conjunction with Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen*, 1975) had been as widely accessible as that of *Young Mr. Lincoln*, or had the full version of "Technique and Ideology" be available much earlier? If such a question sounds rhetorical, the question of who writes and speaks for a "militant cinema" is not. Given how American television represents what we currently call the "Gulf crisis," and not "our own crisis," that question has no less urgency now than in 1969.

RICHARD ABEL

Emile Cohl, Caricature, and Film

By Donald Crafton, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990, $67.50.

It is obvious that the study of early cinema has become one of the most energetic, exciting, and compelling areas of film scholarship today. It is equally as obvious that one central figure in the vigorous growth of this important realm of cinema scholarship has been Donald Crafton from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where he directs the Center for Film and Theater Research.

Beyond his general contributions to today's investigation into early cinema—for example, his editorship of a forthcoming special issue of the important bilingual journal *Iris*, on the early cinema spectator—Crafton has almost singlehandedly been responsible for showing that one intuition of the early cinema scholar—namely, that this cinema often represents a non-narrative alternative to the Hollywood tradition—has at least one very overwhelming basis in fact: there was a mass of *animated* films that intensely rejected classic narrativity for the sake of show, play, the concerted subversion of representational logic. Crafton's 1982 book, *Before Mickey: The Animated Film, 1898–1928* was a brilliant first unearthing of filmic traditions that worked to resist Disneyesque anthropomorphism and moralism.

Crafton's new book, *Emile Cohl, Caricature, and Film*, is an equally striking inquiry into the workings of early animation. Beautiful in look and design, with stunning reproductions (over 300) from films and newspapers, *Emile Cohl* offers a biography of a figure who virtually created the European art of animation only to be forced into involuntary retirement under the pressures of an art-become-industry.

Crafton himself refers to his book as a "conventional biography," but much of *Emile Cohl*'s power comes from its offer of more than just the existential details of a life. In this respect, there's an interesting ambiguity in the title of the book where, avoiding the colon that has become all too *de rigueur* for academic titles, all the terms exist on an equal footing. On the one hand, "caricature" and "film" can be seen still as dependent terms: the book *is* within this perspective centrally about Emile Cohl, and we learn how Cohl moved from being one of the most important caricaturists at the end of the nineteenth century to become a central figure in the attempts by Pathé, Gaumont, and Eclair to capture world markets by diversification into such genres as the animated film. The life story Crafton tells here is fascinating—filled with tempestuous love affairs, incredible swindles, even duels of honor. Perhaps the most engrossing part of the narrative concerns Cohl's relationship with the famous nineteenth-century caricaturist André Gill: it was with Gill that Cohl had his first apprenticeship in the art of satiric drawing and theirs was a relationship of great dependency that ended pathetically with a strong emotional reversal as Cohl ended up being the only one to stand by the aged Gill at the end of his life when he had sunk into poverty, depression, senility.

Emile Cohl is a major addition to the library of great film biographies. But, on the other hand, Crafton moves beyond the limits of conventional biography in such a way that his book becomes a full study of caricature and early cinema with Cohl serving as no more than one and only one example of a career within the complex worlds of caricature

French or French-inflected interventions that were much less politically engaged—e.g., Noël Burch's "Propositions" (*Afterimage*, 1974), Daniel Dayan's "The Tutor-Code of Classical Cinema" (*Film Quarterly*, 1974), and especially Jean-Louis Baudry's "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus" (*Film Quarterly*, 1974–75). Would the historical trajectory of our own (that is, American) film theory and criticism have been different if *Cahiers* texts such as the critique of *La Vie est à nous* and *Morocco* (especially in conjunction with Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen*, 1975) had been as widely accessible as that of *Young Mr. Lincoln*, or had the full version of "Technique and Ideology" be available much earlier? If such a question sounds rhetorical, the question of who writes and speaks for a "militant cinema" is not. Given how American television represents what we currently call the "Gulf crisis," and not "our own crisis," that question has no less urgency now than in 1969.

RICHARD ABEL

Emile Cohl, Caricature, and Film

By Donald Crafton, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990, $67.50.

It is obvious that the study of early cinema has become one of the most energetic, exciting, and compelling areas of film scholarship today. It is equally as obvious that one central figure in the vigorous growth of this important realm of cinema scholarship has been Donald Crafton from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where he directs the Center for Film and Theater Research.

Beyond his general contributions to today's investigation into early cinema—for example, his editorship of a forthcoming special issue of the important bilingual journal *Iris*, on the early cinema spectator—Crafton has almost singlehandedly been responsible for showing that one intuition of the early cinema scholar—namely, that this cinema often represents a non-narrative alternative to the Hollywood tradition—has at least one very overwhelming basis in fact: there was a mass of *animated* films that intensely rejected classic narrativity for the sake of show, play, the concerted subversion of representational logic. Crafton's 1982 book, *Before Mickey: The Animated Film, 1898–1928* was a brilliant first unearthing of filmic traditions that worked to resist Disneyesque anthropomorphism and moralism.

Crafton's new book, *Emile Cohl, Caricature, and Film*, is an equally striking inquiry into the workings of early animation. Beautiful in look and design, with stunning reproductions (over 300) from films and newspapers, *Emile Cohl* offers a biography of a figure who virtually created the European art of animation only to be forced into involuntary retirement under the pressures of an art-become-industry.

Crafton himself refers to his book as a "conventional biography," but much of *Emile Cohl*'s power comes from its offer of more than just the existential details of a life. In this respect, there's an interesting ambiguity in the title of the book where, avoiding the colon that has become all too *de rigueur* for academic titles, all the terms exist on an equal footing. On the one hand, "caricature" and "film" can be seen still as dependent terms: the book *is* within this perspective centrally about Emile Cohl, and we learn how Cohl moved from being one of the most important caricaturists at the end of the nineteenth century to become a central figure in the attempts by Pathé, Gaumont, and Eclair to capture world markets by diversification into such genres as the animated film. The life story Crafton tells here is fascinating—filled with tempestuous love affairs, incredible swindles, even duels of honor. Perhaps the most engrossing part of the narrative concerns Cohl's relationship with the famous nineteenth-century caricaturist André Gill: it was with Gill that Cohl had his first apprenticeship in the art of satiric drawing and theirs was a relationship of great dependency that ended pathetically with a strong emotional reversal as Cohl ended up being the only one to stand by the aged Gill at the end of his life when he had sunk into poverty, depression, senility.

Emile Cohl is a major addition to the library of great film biographies. But, on the other hand, Crafton moves beyond the limits of conventional biography in such a way that his book becomes a full study of caricature and early cinema with Cohl serving as no more than one and only one example of a career within the complex worlds of caricature

and film. At each and every moment of his narration of the individual life, Crafton offers detailed contextual accounts that are complete studies in their own right. For example, to explain how Cohl fit (or, more precisely perhaps, misfit) into the production patterns of the big French studios, Crafton provides a rich history of all aspects of the state of French cinema at the beginning of the century, from production to exhibition to critical reception.

Perhaps the most intriguing example of such contextualizing occurs in Crafton's recounting of Cohl's earlier work in newspaper and journal caricature. Here, Crafton's study becomes a virtual profile of artistic life in "la belle époque," as he demonstrates the caricaturist's membership in two interrelated cultural groups: the nightclub and cabaret society of Montmartre bohemians (Cohl was a leading participant in the joyous activities of two protosurrealist subcultures—the Hydropathes and the Incoherents) and the larger society of those satiric artists who offered what literary critic Richard Terdiman (cited by Crafton) calls a counterdiscourse of subversive, scabrous, socially critical images. Tracing a lineage from Daumier's wild visual attacks on power, Crafton shows how Cohl was part of an extensive movement to offer an alternate iconography to that of nineteenth-century bourgeois propriety. But Crafton is also quick to remind us that satiric imagery does not necessarily lead to a fully revolutionary politics. For all the surrealist absurdity of his bizarre imagery, Cohl never wanted to lose touch with popular taste and was a strong condemner of high modernist experimentation in art. And for all his condemnation of the excesses of dominant government, Cohl was a virulent anti-Dreyfusard, defending the value of Nation against what he seemed to imagine as the dangers of semiticized capitalism.

Emile Cohl is a breathtaking performance in film scholarship. Crafton moves with finesse from biography to cultural study to institutional and industrial history to textual analysis and interpretation. At the same time, the book matches the sharpness of its historical reconstruction with rigorous and advanced theoretical insight. Indeed, one chapter—a dissection of the cliches that would see early cinema as deriving directly from the nineteenth-century newspaper cartoon—demonstrates brilliantly how theory and history can share the same stakes and adopt the same methods. Ranging between narratological analysis of the diverse ways cartoons and films frame space and time *and* genealogical investigation of the actual facts of film's debt (or lack thereof) to the early comic strip, Crafton offers a major revision of our basic stereotypes of early film history.

It would be a shame were *Emile Cohl* to be attended to primarily by scholars of the animated film alone. To be sure, in its theory and history, the book is one of the most important contributions to that essential part of film production. But *Emile Cohl* is central for film study per se, offering a fresh, exciting look at the complicated world of early cinema. DANA POLAN

Japanese Cinema: An Introduction

By Donald Richie. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1990.

With some two dozen books in English already in print, one would hope (or at least *I* would hope) that few readers of this journal would require an "introduction" to the Japanese cinema, even one as compactly elegant as this one from the dean of Japanese film criticism, Donald Richie. Of course, the book is not intended for the film scholar, but rather the nonspecialist reader, as the Images of Asia series, in which this book is the latest entry, proclaims. Richie has been "introducing" Japanese cinema for over thirty years now, and one would like to think his work has been done, say the way in which *Sarawak Crafts* or *Indonesian Batik: Processes, Patterns and Places* have perhaps not. In addition, the film scholar in me is somewhat bemused to see *Japanese Cinema* linked, as well, to *Balinese Paintings*, *Chinese Jade*, *Sailing Craft of Indonesia*, and *The Birds of Java and Bali*.

That having been said, Richie's book is a chronological tour of Japanese cinema, from its origins as an adjunct of the stage to its deterioration as an adjunct of television. There were, however, numerous highlights in between, and Richie breathlessly but suggestively attempts to hit upon most of them. His basic orientation is director-

and film. At each and every moment of his narration of the individual life, Crafton offers detailed contextual accounts that are complete studies in their own right. For example, to explain how Cohl fit (or, more precisely perhaps, misfit) into the production patterns of the big French studios, Crafton provides a rich history of all aspects of the state of French cinema at the beginning of the century, from production to exhibition to critical reception.

Perhaps the most intriguing example of such contextualizing occurs in Crafton's recounting of Cohl's earlier work in newspaper and journal caricature. Here, Crafton's study becomes a virtual profile of artistic life in "la belle époque," as he demonstrates the caricaturist's membership in two interrelated cultural groups: the nightclub and cabaret society of Montmartre bohemians (Cohl was a leading participant in the joyous activities of two protosurrealist subcultures—the Hydropathes and the Incoherents) and the larger society of those satiric artists who offered what literary critic Richard Terdiman (cited by Crafton) calls a counterdiscourse of subversive, scabrous, socially critical images. Tracing a lineage from Daumier's wild visual attacks on power, Crafton shows how Cohl was part of an extensive movement to offer an alternate iconography to that of nineteenth-century bourgeois propriety. But Crafton is also quick to remind us that satiric imagery does not necessarily lead to a fully revolutionary politics. For all the surrealist absurdity of his bizarre imagery, Cohl never wanted to lose touch with popular taste and was a strong condemner of high modernist experimentation in art. And for all his condemnation of the excesses of dominant government, Cohl was a virulent anti-Dreyfusard, defending the value of Nation against what he seemed to imagine as the dangers of semiticized capitalism.

Emile Cohl is a breathtaking performance in film scholarship. Crafton moves with finesse from biography to cultural study to institutional and industrial history to textual analysis and interpretation. At the same time, the book matches the sharpness of its historical reconstruction with rigorous and advanced theoretical insight. Indeed, one chapter—a dissection of the cliches that would see early cinema as deriving directly from the nineteenth-century newspaper cartoon—demonstrates brilliantly how theory and history can share the same stakes and adopt the same methods. Ranging between narratological analysis of the diverse ways cartoons and films frame space and time *and* genealogical investigation of the actual facts of film's debt (or lack thereof) to the early comic strip, Crafton offers a major revision of our basic stereotypes of early film history.

It would be a shame were *Emile Cohl* to be attended to primarily by scholars of the animated film alone. To be sure, in its theory and history, the book is one of the most important contributions to that essential part of film production. But *Emile Cohl* is central for film study per se, offering a fresh, exciting look at the complicated world of early cinema. DANA POLAN

Japanese Cinema: An Introduction

By Donald Richie. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1990.

With some two dozen books in English already in print, one would hope (or at least *I* would hope) that few readers of this journal would require an "introduction" to the Japanese cinema, even one as compactly elegant as this one from the dean of Japanese film criticism, Donald Richie. Of course, the book is not intended for the film scholar, but rather the nonspecialist reader, as the Images of Asia series, in which this book is the latest entry, proclaims. Richie has been "introducing" Japanese cinema for over thirty years now, and one would like to think his work has been done, say the way in which *Sarawak Crafts* or *Indonesian Batik: Processes, Patterns and Places* have perhaps not. In addition, the film scholar in me is somewhat bemused to see *Japanese Cinema* linked, as well, to *Balinese Paintings*, *Chinese Jade*, *Sailing Craft of Indonesia*, and *The Birds of Java and Bali*.

That having been said, Richie's book is a chronological tour of Japanese cinema, from its origins as an adjunct of the stage to its deterioration as an adjunct of television. There were, however, numerous highlights in between, and Richie breathlessly but suggestively attempts to hit upon most of them. His basic orientation is director-

centered, and we should recall that this orientation characterized his co-authored pioneering study of the Japanese cinema, *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry*, in 1959. It was a daring strategy at the time, and it remains both an influential one for subsequent studies of the Japanese cinema by others, and a solid organizational tool for this book. The story of Japanese cinema as it is worked out by significant directors is preceded by the rehearsal of Japanese aesthetic concerns as they differ from the West's (the treatment of cinematic space, notions of framing the image, and narrative conventions, in particular, are dealt with perceptively). And interspersed with the highlights of directorial efforts are notions of both the changing culture and industry. It is a deft run-through of an enormously complex history. For those who have so far avoided coming to terms with this rich and varied foreign cinema, who have wondered what all the fuss is about, you have in this book a painless, suggestive, and in every way genuine introduction to the Japanese cinema. DAVID DESSER

Bondanella, Peter. *Italian Cinema: From Neorealism to the Present*. New York: Ungar, 1990. $17.95 paper. A revision of the 1983 work, with greatly expanded bibliography and notes.

Bruskin, David N. *The White Brothers: Jack, Jules, and Sam White*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1990. $49.50. No. 10, Directors Guild of America Oral History Series. The Whites began with Sennett comedies and ended in Columbia shorts in the 1950s—including the Three Stooges.

Mordden, Ethan. *The Hollywood Studios: House Style in the Golden Age of the Movies*. New York: Knopf, 1988. $24.95. With the plethora of current books analyzing in depth the individual studios, the directors, the writers, the Jews, the blacks, the stars, do we have a use for such a general, loose, opinionated, almost scrapbook of a work such as Mordden's? I would say "yes," if only for the fact that Mordden brings the word "fun" back into film scholarship. He covers the Hollywood studios in their heyday and tries to compare the characteristics of each studio's style, discussing in particular how each in turn was affected and shaped by the personality, philosophy, and attitudes of its presiding mogul. The book says nothing new and Mordden's writing style, his judgments, and his use of casual anecdote and story will infuriate purists, semiologists, structuralists, and serious historians, but delight non-academic readers. This isn't history in depth. Not even really history in the shallows. But in between the jokes the book makes some perceptive points and is immense fun to read. ALAN ROSENTHAL

To Be Continued!

The balance of books under History, plus the categories of Reference, Scripts, Textbooks, Theory, and Miscellaneous will appear in the following issue.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION, 9/30/90

Title: **Film Quarterly**. Frequency: Quarterly. Four issues published annually. Subscription price: $15.00 individuals, $30.00 institutions. Location of office of publication: 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, Alameda County, CA 94720. Headquarters of publishers: Same. Publisher: University of California Press, 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94720. Editor: Ernest Callenbach, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA 94720. Owner: The Regents of the University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720. The purpose, function and non-profit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal income tax purposes have not changed during preceding 12 months.

Extent and nature of circulation:	Av. no. copies each issue preceding 12 months	Actual no. copies of single issue pub. nearest to filing date
A. Total no. copies printed	7500	7580
B. Paid circulation:		
1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales	3295	3280
2. Mail subscriptions	3269	3311
C. Total paid circulation	6564	6591
D. Free distribution	180	197
E. Total distribution	6744	6788
F. Copies not distributed	756	792
G. Total	7500	7580

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. Sandra Whisler, Journals Manager

centered, and we should recall that this orientation characterized his co-authored pioneering study of the Japanese cinema, *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry*, in 1959. It was a daring strategy at the time, and it remains both an influential one for subsequent studies of the Japanese cinema by others, and a solid organizational tool for this book. The story of Japanese cinema as it is worked out by significant directors is preceded by the rehearsal of Japanese aesthetic concerns as they differ from the West's (the treatment of cinematic space, notions of framing the image, and narrative conventions, in particular, are dealt with perceptively). And interspersed with the highlights of directorial efforts are notions of both the changing culture and industry. It is a deft run-through of an enormously complex history. For those who have so far avoided coming to terms with this rich and varied foreign cinema, who have wondered what all the fuss is about, you have in this book a painless, suggestive, and in every way genuine introduction to the Japanese cinema. DAVID DESSER

Bondanella, Peter. *Italian Cinema: From Neorealism to the Present*. New York: Ungar, 1990. $17.95 paper. A revision of the 1983 work, with greatly expanded bibliography and notes.

Bruskin, David N. *The White Brothers: Jack, Jules, and Sam White*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1990. $49.50. No. 10, Directors Guild of America Oral History Series. The Whites began with Sennett comedies and ended in Columbia shorts in the 1950s—including the Three Stooges.

Mordden, Ethan. *The Hollywood Studios: House Style in the Golden Age of the Movies*. New York: Knopf, 1988. $24.95. With the plethora of current books analyzing in depth the individual studios, the directors, the writers, the Jews, the blacks, the stars, do we have a use for such a general, loose, opinionated, almost scrapbook of a work such as Mordden's? I would say "yes," if only for the fact that Mordden brings the word "fun" back into film scholarship. He covers the Hollywood studios in their heyday and tries to compare the characteristics of each studio's style, discussing in particular how each in turn was affected and shaped by the personality, philosophy, and attitudes of its presiding mogul. The book says nothing new and Mordden's writing style, his judgments, and his use of casual anecdote and story will infuriate purists, semiologists, structuralists, and serious historians, but delight non-academic readers. This isn't history in depth. Not even really history in the shallows. But in between the jokes the book makes some perceptive points and is immense fun to read. ALAN ROSENTHAL

To Be Continued!

The balance of books under History, plus the categories of Reference, Scripts, Textbooks, Theory, and Miscellaneous will appear in the following issue.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION, 9/30/90

Title: **Film Quarterly**. Frequency: Quarterly. Four issues published annually. Subscription price: $15.00 individuals, $30.00 institutions. Location of office of publication: 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, Alameda County, CA 94720. Headquarters of publishers: Same. Publisher: University of California Press, 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94720. Editor: Ernest Callenbach, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA 94720. Owner: The Regents of the University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720. The purpose, function and non-profit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal income tax purposes have not changed during preceding 12 months.

Extent and nature of circulation:	Av. no. copies each issue preceding 12 months	Actual no. copies of single issue pub. nearest to filing date
A. Total no. copies printed	7500	7580
B. Paid circulation:		
1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales	3295	3280
2. Mail subscriptions	3269	3311
C. Total paid circulation	6564	6591
D. Free distribution	180	197
E. Total distribution	6744	6788
F. Copies not distributed	756	792
G. Total	7500	7580

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. Sandra Whisler, Journals Manager

Princeton

Kurosawa on location.

The Warrior's Camera

The Cinema of Akira Kurosawa

Stephen Prince

Akira Kurosawa has been internationally acclaimed as a giant of world cinema. *Rashōmon* helped ignite Western interest in the Japanese cinema, and *Seven Samurai* and *Yōjimbō* remain enormously popular both in Japan and abroad. Providing a new and comprehensive look at this master filmmaker, *The Warrior's Camera* probes the complex visual structure of Kurosawa's work. The book shows how Kurosawa attempted to symbolize on film a course of national development for post-war Japan, and it traces the ways that he tied his social visions to a dynamic system of visual and narrative forms.

"This is a long-awaited book that marks the needed next step in Kurosawa criticism."
—David Desser, University of Illinois

"Prince is very insightful in analyzing and interpreting Kurosawa's work. . . ."*—Kyoko Hirano, Director, Japan Film Center, Japan Society*

Paper: $14.95 ISBN 0-691-00859-0
Cloth: $39.50 ISBN 0-691-03160-6

The Films of Carlos Saura

The Practice of Seeing

Marvin D'Lugo

Spanish filmmaker Carlos Saura, who began his career under the censorship of Franco's regime, has forged an international reputation for his unique cinematic treatment of emotional and spiritual responses to repressive political conditions. In his best-known films such as *Carmen* and *El Dorado* reality and fantasy are deliberately, and characteristically, fused together. In this first English-language book on Saura, Marvin D'Lugo looks at the social and artistic forces behind this film auteur's highly personal cinema.

". . . one of the most sophisticated studies on Saura in any language. It is brilliant on many of the films discussed and always cogent and informative on the cultural context."
—Marsha Kinder, University of Southern California

". . . offers a sustained and coherent framework for interpreting Saura's often difficult films and shows the consistency of his cinematic *ouvre* over the decades. . . definitely a significant contribution to the field."*—Katherine S. Kovacs*

Paper: $14.95 ISBN 0-691-00855-8
Cloth: $45.00 ISBN 0-691-03142-8

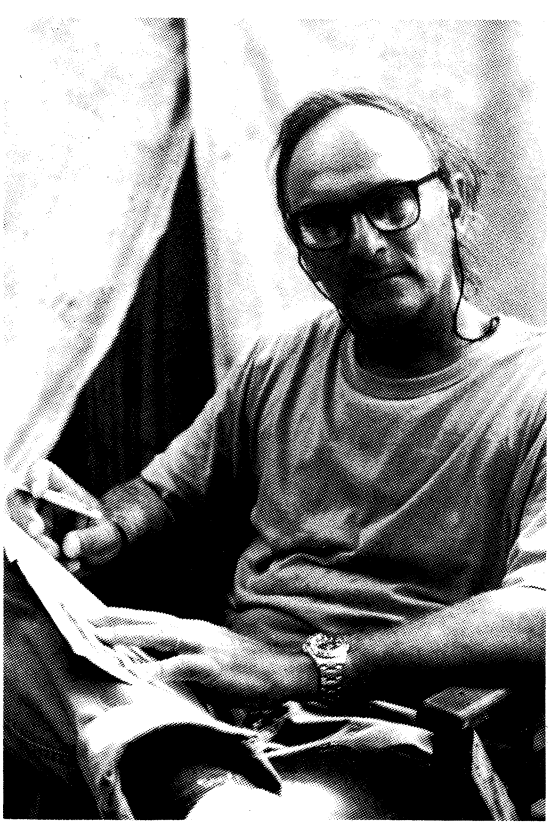


Photo courtesy of Elias Querejeta

Politics of the Self

Feminism and the Postmodern in West German Literature and Film

Richard W. McCormick

Richard McCormick examines the concepts of postmodernity and postmodernism as they apply to West Germany, discussing them against the background of cultural and political upheaval in that country since the 1960s. Considering six literary and cinematic texts that are marked by a preoccupation with the self and subjectivity, he underscores the crucial influence of feminism on writers and filmmakers—and on the "postmodern."

"Richard McCormick argues convincingly for a fundamentally historical understanding of postmodernism in literature and in culture in general—a postmodernism resulting in large part from the increasing influence of feminism in West German cultural life."—*Patrice Petro, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee*

Paper: $14.95 ISBN 0-691-01483-3
Cloth: $45.00 ISBN 0-691-06851-8

New in paperback

The Hitchcock Romance

Love and Irony in Hitchcock's Films

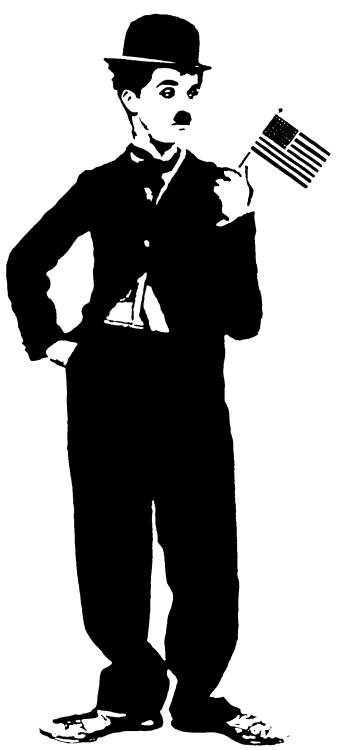
Lesley Brill

"Brill argues his case ingeniously and goes a long way to explaining why Hitchcock was such a tease: he loved to scare us before leading us by the hand back to a world where dragons do not exist—except in the dark of the cinema. . . ."—*David Coward, Times Literary Supplement*

"Deserves a place alongside the most provocative and incisive Hitchcock criticism of the decade."
—*Choice*

"Brill argues his case persuasively in a knowledgeable analysis of Hitchcock's work."
—*George L. George, American Cinematographer*

Now in paper: $12.95 ISBN 0-691-00286-X



Winner of the Theatre Library Association's Annual Book Award

Chaplin and American Culture

The Evolution of a Star Image

Charles J. Maland

"A fascinating, ambitious and incisive look at American culture and at the cinematic genius."—*Robin Lippincott, New York Times Book Review*

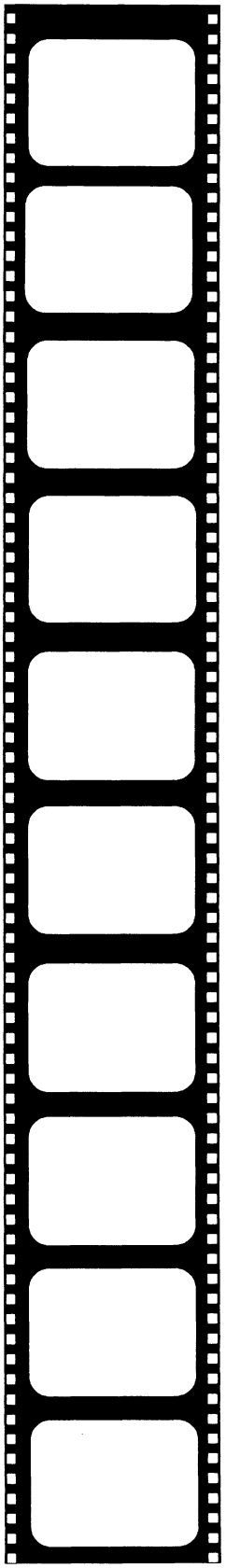
"Maland pioneers a new approach to Chaplin. . . . Anyone interested in Chaplin must read it. And those engaged in the task of bringing to film history a new awareness of the cultural and political context of film production and reception will find this a book to think about, argue with, and learn from."
—*Tom Gunning, Film Quarterly*

"[Here is] the story behind Charlie Chaplin's rise and fall from grace in the public eye, his attempts to redeem his stardom, his twenty-year banishment from the United States, and his qualified rapprochement. . . . [Maland] puts us in touch with those times past but also confronts us with those still-lurking societal instincts that urge a culture's killing of its prophets."
—*Gerard Molyneaux, Flashback*

Now in paper: $16.95 ISBN 0-691-02860-5

Princeton University Press

41 WILLIAM ST. • PRINCETON, NJ 08540 • (609) 258-4900
ORDERS: 800-PRS-ISBN (777-4726) • OR FROM YOUR LOCAL BOOKSTORE



film

Before Caligari

German Cinema, 1895–1920

Edited by Paolo Cherchi Usai and Lorenzo Codelli

The total achievement of German silent cinema has been overshadowed by a handful of film "classics" whose notoriety has effectively obliterated the memory of the German film industry's accomplishments before the Weimar period.

This collection of essays brings together some of the most up-to-date research on early German cinema, as well as many unpublished film stills. It attempts to summarize the current knowledge about this relatively neglected subject and reminds us of how much remains to be done to document and undertand this crucial part of Europe's visual heritage.

English & Italian
250 halftones
Cloth $75.00

Distributed for
Edizioni Biblioteca dell'Immagine

The Wages of Sin

Censorship and the
Fallen Woman Film, 1928–1942

Lea Jacobs

The story of the fallen woman was a staple of film melodrama in the late 1920s and early 1930s. In *The Wages of Sin*, Lea Jacobs uses the fallen woman genre to examine the industry's system of self-censorship and the ways that representations of sexuality were circumscribed. Based upon an examination of the extensive MPPDA case files, Jacobs reconstructs the process of self-regulation, focusing on six films that posed distinct problems for the film industry, because they had either encountered difficulties with state censors or had provoked protest from reform groups. Close analyses of *The Easiest Way*, *Baby Face*, *Blonde Venus*, *Anna Karenina*, *Kitty Foyle*, and *Stella Dallas* reveal the ideology of self-regulation at work and the social constraints affecting the film industry.

50 halftones, 1 chart
Cloth $37.50
Paper $14.95

Wisconsin

The University of Wisconsin Press
114 North Murray Street • Madison, WI 53715 • MC & VISA orders call (608) 262-2994